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Almond Blossom

By D. H. Lawrence

EVEN iron can put forth,
Even iron.

This is the iron age,
But let us take heart
Seeing iron break and bud,
Seeing rusty iron puff with clouds of blossom.

The almond tree,
December's bare iron hooks sticking out of earth.

The almond tree,
That knows the deadliest poison, like a snake
In supreme bitterness.

Upon the iron, and upon the steel,
Odd flakes as if of snow, odd bits of snow,
Odd crumbs of melting snow.

But you mistake, it is not from the sky;
From out the iron, and from out the steel,
Flying not down from heaven, but storming up,
Strange storming up from the dense under-earth
Along the iron, to the living steel
In rose-hot tips, and flakes of rose-pale snow
Setting supreme annunciation to the world.

Nay, what a heart of delicate super-faith,
Iron-breaking,
The rusty swords of almond trees.

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Trees suffer, like races, down the long ages.
They wander and are exiled, they live in exile through long ages
Like drawn blades never sheathed, hacked and gone black,
The alien trees in alien lands: and yet
The heart of blossom,
The unquenchable heart of blossom.

Look at the many-cicatrised frail vine, none more scarred and frail,
Yet see him fling himself abroad in fresh abandon
From the small wound-stump.

Even the wilful, obstinate, gummy fig-tree
Can be kept down, but he'll burst like a polyp into prolixity.

And the almond tree, in exile, in the iron age.

This is the ancient southern earth whence the vases were baked, amphorus, craters, cantharus, œnochoe and open-hearted cylix,
Bristling now with the iron of almond trees.

Iron, but unforgotten,
Iron, dawn-hearted,
Ever-beating dawn-heart, enveloped in iron against the exile, against the ages.

See it come forth in blossom
From the snow-remembering heart
In long-nighted January,
In the long dark nights of the evening star, and Sirius, and the Etna snow-wind through the long night.

Sweating his drops of blood through the long-nighted Gethsemane
Into blossom, into pride, into honey-triumph, into most exquisite splendour.
Oh, give me the tree of life in blossom
And the Cross sprouting its superb and fearless flowers!

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ALMOND BLOSSOM

Something must be reassuring to the almond, in the evening star, and the snow-wind, and the long, long nights,
Some memory of far, sun-gentler lands,
So that the faith in his heart smiles again
And his blood ripples with that untellable delight of once-more-vindicated faith,
And the Gethsemane blood at the iron pores unfolds, unfolds,
Pearls itself into tenderness of bud
And in a great and sacred forthcoming steps forth, steps out in one stride
A naked tree of blossom, like a bridegroom bathing in dew, divested of cover,
Frail-naked, utterly uncovered
To the green night-baying of the dog-star, Etna's snow-edged wind
And January's loud-seeming sun.

Think of it, from the iron fastness
Suddenly to dare to come out naked, in perfection of blossom, beyond the sword-rust.
Think, to stand there in full-unfolded nudity, smiling,
With all the snow-wind, and the sun-glare, and the dog-star baying epithalamion.

Oh, honey-bodied beautiful one,
Come forth from iron,
Red your heart is.
Fragile-tender, fragile-tender life-body,
More fearless than iron all the time,
And so much prouder, so disdainful of reluctances.

In the distance like hoar-frost, like silvery ghosts communing on a green hill,
Hoar-frost-like and mysterious.

In the garden raying out
With a body like spray, dawn-tender, and looking about
With such insuperable, subtly-smiling assurance,
Sword-blade-born.

Unpromised,
No bounds being set.

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Flaked out and come unpromised,
The tree being life-divine,
Fearing nothing, life-blissful at the core
Within iron and earth.

Knots of pink, fish-silvery
In heaven, in blue, blue heaven,
Soundless, bliss-full, wide-rayed, honey-bodied,
Red at the core,
Red at the core,
Knotted in heaven upon the fine light.

Open,
Open,
Five times wide open,
Six times wide open,
And given, and perfect;
And red at the core with the last sore-heartedness,
Sore-hearted-looking.

The Arum Lily

By Catherine Kirsopp

You grew from out the earth, a dream earth dreamed:
Not as a vain desire forever sought;
But in your breathless loveliness, you seemed
The statuary of some fleet wing of thought;
Of earthly whiteness wonderfully wrought.

Colder than life you were, warmer than death.
Your hush was lovelier music than the lyre;
Your scent excelled the sweetness of life's breath:
So fair, that even your passionate tongue of fire
Froze 'mid the wonder of its own desire.

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A dream? and yet all other dreams had flown;
Or stayed afar, like moons above the night:
But you were close, the brown earth was your throne,
And strange! O stranger than the aura's light!
My mouth has touched your petal's perfect white!

Love in the Night

By Ivan Alan Seymour

NIGHT's canopies are draped about the village.
A lonely star blinks coldly, and aloof,
Upon the trees that sway above my roof,
In which the midnight breezes moan and pillage—
Whisking stark leaves away from dew-gemmed fellows
On swiftly silent and relentless wings;
Bearing them down the air—defenceless things
Upon a plunging wind which tears and bellows,
Wafting strange sounds—the croaking of a frog;
The dreary howling of an exiled dog;
The chill note of some frightened, darkbound bird;
And that vast stillness which is almost heard.

But through the curtains of my heart, close-drawn,
Is quivering the first pale shaft of—DAWN!

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The Novels of Violet Hunt

By May Sinclair

A WRITER who has once had the misfortune to be called "clever" is damned for all the higher purposes of praise. He may go on adding finer and finer and more and more serious and poignant qualities to his original cleverness, but it will avail him nothing; each new achievement is just another clever trick of his. If the author of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* had been our contemporary and had started by writing, say, *Man and Superman*, he would never have been known as anything but that clever dramatist, Mr. Shakespeare. You may qualify the adjective as you please—brilliantly clever, consummately clever, uncannily clever; the brilliance, the consummation, the uncanniness are forgotten; the cleverness is what sticks.

Let him begin with a reputation for hardness tacked on to his cleverness, and he will never be credited with any tender quality at all.

It was with such a label that Violet Hunt, some time in the early 'nineties, started her career. Her talent was judged to be a merely hard yet superficial cleverness, as of so much ice for her to skate on; and in spite of the depth and poignancy of *White Rose of Weary Leaf*, of *Their Lives* and *Their Hearts*, in spite of the grim primitive uncanniness of *Tales of the Uneasy*, it is as a brilliant skater on ice that she has passed from that century to this.

To be sure, she has done her best to support the disastrous tradition. She began with the sheer cleverness of *The Maiden's Progress* and *A Hard Woman*; she allowed *The Doll* and *The Celebrity's Daughter* to come after *White Rose of Weary Leaf*, and *The Last Ditch* after *Their Lives*; and she has given us no more *Tales of the Uneasy*. But these beginnings and these relapses are negligible in the face of her positive achievement. If, in the reviewer's well-worn phrase, Violet Hunt had written nothing but *White Rose* and *Their Lives* and *Their*

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Hearts, these would have been enough to establish a reputation for more than mere cleverness. If only she had written nothing else she would have been recognised as one of the most sincere, uncompromising, and serious of psychological realists.

Unfortunately, *The Maiden's Progress* and *A Hard Woman* came first, and they had a little accomplished air of finality about them. They came in that season of cleverness and hard brilliance, the early 'nineties, the days of the *Pseudonym Library* and *The Yellow Book*, and *The Woman Who Did*.

But already in her youthful work there was, for the discerning, the promise of better things. It is in *The Maiden's Progress*. It is in the last scene of *A Hard Woman*. Possibly this title won for Violet Hunt her celebrity of hardness. On the principle that " Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat," who draws hard women must herself be hard. Yet it was clear even then that Violet Hunt is not on the side of hardness; she is all for the tender and suffering, the sensitive hearts over whom coarse natures ride rough-shod. This novel might have been written to show the horror of hardness. And Moderna in *The Maiden's Progress*, Amy Stephens in *White Rose*, Christina and Orinthia in *Their Lives* and *Their Hearts*, are all vulnerable. They are tortured by a look, by a word said or not said. And Violet Hunt draws them with a superior sympathy and understanding.

So much for the superstition of hardness.

Taken in the bulk, Violet Hunt's work is considerable. There is a record of poems dating from 1879; a long list of novels and short stories dating from '94 to 1921.

There are the first two already mentioned. There is *Unkist, Unkind*, a tale of murder and modern witchcraft, showing a characteristic leaning to the gruesome and uncanny.

There is *The House of Many Mirrors*. This novel is too uneven to be wholly admirable. The end is worked up to a fairly effective climax, but the foregoing parts are poorly constructed. There is an utter lack of cohesion and proportion. Too much importance is given to irrelevant matters—for example, Rosamund Pleydell's traffic in her own cast-off clothing. Action and motive are unre-

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lated. We know that Rosamund is intriguing to get the inheritance for the young husband she adores, over the heads of his two cousins, Lily Mackenzie and Emily Gideon. But it is hard to see how the scheme is furthered by her befriending of the disgraced and disinherited Lily, or by her surreptitious invasion of the Gideons' house. There is no sustained illusion of reality. The situation calls for simplification and compression, but it is spun out and frittered away, and the end comes too late to move us. There is the stuff of tragedy in Rosamund's sublime deception, declaring herself pregnant when she is dying of cancer, and (by a system of posthumously posted letters) pretending to be alive when she is dead. But somehow the thing misses fire.

Not so *The Celebrity at Home* and *The Celebrity's Daughter*. They are very successful and agreeable light comedy. The Comic Spirit, absent from Violet Hunt's other books, plays delightfully round the figure of the Celebrity, exposed in his unclothed reality to the irreverent and precocious eyes of his daughter Tempe.

The Last Ditch marks on the whole a decline from brilliant cleverness to mere smartness; but it has its amusing and redeeming moments; it is more or less true to the spirit of the class that took the Great War light-heartedly, and with a heroic frivolity proved that "*dulce et decorum est*," et cetera.

There are *Zeppelin Nights* and *The Desirable Alien* and others more negligible.

And there are five outstanding ones. These compel you to remember them: *White Rose of Weary Leaf*, *Their Lives*, *Their Hearts*, *Tales of the Uneasy*, and *Sooner or Later*. This last I should place a little lower than the other four. *White Rose*, even while remembered, can be read again and again with pleasure.

The others must be slightly forgotten to renew their appeal. They should be read separately with a stretch of time between. Taken as the critic must take them, one on the top of the other, their effect is a little stifling. There is a want of perspective and relief. It is like listening to a person with a fixed idea; like looking at repeated portraits of the same figure. There never was such a gallery of English *demi-vierges*.

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To be sure, their demi-virginity is purely mental. They are betrayed first by their own minds. There is a *naïveté* about them, an innocent uncertainty. Rosette and Christina offer themselves to their lovers, but they only half know what they are doing; it is partly because they desire to know that they do it. Their passions are too exalted, too pathetic, too foredoomed to count as sensual. Their senses are dumb, unawakened, or superseded. It is their hearts that clamour, unsatisfying and unsatisfied. That is the trouble with them all. One burst of honest sensuality would have settled their business for them and left them calm. But no; they are too subtle for their own or their lovers' satisfaction. They are born to torture and be tortured.

Violet Hunt's hand is masterly in the portrayal of this type. There is nothing in it she is not aware of, nothing that she cannot show. Moderna, Rosette, Orinthia, Christina, are all half-virgins, " born for irregular situations." Orinthia of *Their Hearts* is safely and soundly married, the irreproachable spouse of her cousin, John Dempster Blenkinsopp. But Orinthia of *Their Lives* is a terror to parents and guardians. In her early and unwholesome teens she strikes up an acquaintance with a seedy, middle-aged stranger, an amatory beach-comber, the prowling male of seaside promenades. The child is innocent enough; but there is a terrible suggestion of what might have happened if the maidservant had not looked over the sea-wall and caught them sitting side by side on the beach in the dark. And when Orinthia finally marries you feel that her gods have been good to her.

But the gods have no sort of care for Christina. Christina (as Robert Assheton says of Rosette in *Sooner or Later*) is " determined to be ruined." Dull, honest marriage has no attraction for these women; they must gamble with passion, taking big risks. Before they can feel passion they must feel the exciting thrill of danger.

Amy Stephens in *White Rose of Weary Leaf* is another type. She knows no passion but the maternal passion; she is not in love with Jeremy Dand, her middle-aged married lover; she resists him without a struggle until the catastrophe that breaks her nerve. But she, too, abhors marriage and prefers " the irregular situation."

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And so they all have the same story. Moderna of *The Maiden's Progress* is an understudy for Christina. Amy is a Christina plus the maternal instinct and minus Christina's talent and her temperament. Rosette is another Christina with another Balfame. They are not content to play with fire at the tips of their fingers; they must throw themselves body and soul into the blaze; and they come out of it scorched and writhing and distorted. They have the qualities of their defects; they are noble and abject, generous and consumed with jealousy; they cling to their disenchanted lovers, and are beaten off, and cling again with a reckless, tactless fidelity. They are heavy-handed and heavy-hearted in loving and have no joy in it; they can neither give happiness nor receive it. They are doomed and know it. Their moment's rapture is spoiled by their premonition of its end. Their lovers' kisses fall on faces wet and salt with tears.

Scenes repeat themselves. Passion, foreboding, reproach, recrimination, repudiation, despair, and more passion. A vicious circle. These figures have no background that counts. Wherever they are, the effect is always the same, of naked passions played out on bare boards before a dark curtain. They may be walking on the Yorkshire moors, or by the bracing north-eastern sea, in woods smelling of damp moss and earth, in gardens by the Solent, and instantly the air is changed; it becomes sultry with passion; it is the air of a stuffy bedroom with the windows tight shut; there is a smell of hair-brushes, cigarette smoke, and warm sachet.

We are least aware of it in *White Rose of Weary Leaf*, because the dominant character, Amy Stephens, is a higher and healthier type. The atmosphere is cleared by conflict, by the beating of her wings as her will resists her lover.

White Rose is perhaps the best book Violet Hunt has written yet; the finest in conception, in form and technique. It is a surprising piece of psychology, male and female. There is no important character in it that does not live, from the amazing and complex Amy Stephens to the too simple and degenerate Dulce Dand, who will go mad if she is not married. Jeremy Dand, Amy's middle-aged married lover, is the one entirely successful male figure that Violet Hunt has created. It is more than a portrait;

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a portrait is painted in the flat, as are the figures of Robert Assheton and Euphan Balfame, in the two dimensions of brutality and sensual passion. Jeremy Dand is a three-dimensional form that we can walk round; he is not drawn, but hewn, chiselled faithfully in his many-sided detail. He is the average sensual man, but he is never brutal like Assheton and Balfame; Violet Hunt has abandoned the fallacy of the ruling passion and presented him as he is, with all his inconsistencies; selfish and unselfish, generous and mean, faithful and faithless, a human battlefield, till in the end his passion for Amy masters him. Whatever he is at the moment, he is given with an unfaltering rightness. All his mental processes are inevitable.

And the drawing of Amy is as masterly. Nothing she does and feels and says could have been done or felt or said differently. This intricate, utterly feminine soul is laid bare to its last throbbing nerve, its ultimate secret thought. We have the whole of it, all the wonderful detail, its courage, its recklessness, its pity, its scrupulousness, its essential decency, its all but indestructible loyalty, its strength and the infinite pathos of its weakness.

The tragedy is worked out to its end with unrelieved, unrelenting gloom. Every line has the effect of rightness, of a flawless finality. It is so far beyond anything that mere cleverness can do. *White Rose of Weary Leaf* alone should have placed Violet Hunt high in the ranks of the tragic realists.

It was followed by lesser works; and criticism in this country, if not disarmed by a burst of excellence at the start, or a steady rise in merit, is apt to judge novelists by their lapses rather than their achievements.

Then in 1916 came *Their Lives*; and now in 1921 *Their Hearts*. We are back again in the sultry air of *Sooner or Later*. It hangs about Davenant Villa, in the folds of the green and gold Morris curtains, mixed with fumes from the white-globed gaseliers.

Davenant Villa, Kensington, Christina Radmall's home, was an intellectual and artistic centre, where the pre-Raphaelites came and the young æsthetes of the late 'seventies. Christina herself is a poet at sixteen and a journalist at twenty. You gather that if she has a passion for the middle-aged and married Emerson Vlaye and

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surrenders afterwards to Mr. Balfame (also married and middle-aged) it is not for want of resources in herself. She is clever, witty, she has read enormously if not profoundly, she has innumerable friends who help her in her career. But this heated atmosphere is never cleared by the play of intellect. The pre-Raphaelites might just as well not be there, for all that Christina or Violet Hunt care about them.

And Violet Hunt is right. The pre-Raphaelites do not matter. What matters is Christina's passion; what matters is the jealousy of the three sisters, Christina, Virgilia, and Orinthia, and the drama of their hearts, the whole close, intimate, stifling family scene in which their lives are set. These inhabitants of Davenant Villa are terrible. The figure of the father, the distinguished painter, Henry Radmall, stands out with a strange incongruous beauty and dignity, untouched by the bickering, the rancour, the combat of mean wills, untouched by the hard, flat, material mind of Victoria Radmall, his wife, who scolds him for saying pounds instead of guineas when he sells his pictures, and for giving away ten-shilling pieces in mistake for sixpences.

True, Mrs. Radmall loves her husband and Christina; Orinthia loves her father; Christina loves her mother, and, when she is old enough to be sorry for her, Orinthia. But between each couple stands Virgilia, complacent, cunning, heartless, utterly selfish, and poisonous with jealousy; Virgilia, who loves nobody but herself, who

"knew how much Papa got for a picture, how much they had a year, how much they had had when they married, the rent of Davenant Villa, what wages the cook got and Trimmer and Grace, and where the principal drains were under the house."

And Christina is jealous of Virgilia. She tries to "keep her down." There is a moment, poignant and unpleasant, when she realises Virgilia's approaching womanhood, that "seemed to put her sister on a pinnacle of elderly mystery, somehow. . . ."

"The curve of Virgilia's hip, spirited, clean cut, with the brown, shiny, spotted material drawn tight over it, reminded the elder sister of the skin and body of an adder she had once come upon in the woods. She had stood and considered it furtively as it lay and sunned itself on a decayed tree-stump, deadly, assured, at ease. . . . ."

There is another moment, unpleasant but poignant, when Virgilia on the night before her wedding comes into

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Christina's room, throws herself on the bed in a hysterical state and implores Christina to enlighten her. And Christina, touched by the appeal, her defences broken down, does her best.

"It was half-past twelve. Virgilia rolled over into a sitting posture on the edge of the bed. She yawned, drew herself up:—

"'Well, and now I'll go back to my own bed, I think.'

"Christina was thoroughly awake and rather cross. 'Do you feel better,' she said, 'or,' with meaning, 'do you want to talk any more?'

"Her mistrust of Virgilia was growing, coming back to her in a great traditional flood. . . . ."

She realises that Virgilia is less innocent than she, that Virgilia has "had" her, and that every word she has said will be used as evidence against her. We do not know that this is so; but we know that Christina feels that it is so.

The marriage of the younger sister is the culminating episode that ends *Their Lives*. It stands for the defeat and doom of Christina. Never, as long as she lives, will she be able to take life like the unscrupulous Virgilia, and, ruthlessly and complacently, conduct it to a successful issue.

The crucial scene is that where Christina, still innocent but infatuated, offers herself to her elderly admirer, the painter, Emerson Vlaye. She does it with a disarming, childlike awkwardness.

"She came up to him close, till her body touched his, her head came just under his chin, so that he could have kissed it or laid his hand upon it. He did neither, he was curious to know what she was about to do or say.

"'I'm not an iceberg,' she said, doggedly; then, with her head down, 'You've no right to say I'm cold.'

"She repeated, 'I'm not, I'm not. . . . Look here, you don't believe in me. . . . But, look here, whatever a woman can give I'll give you. . . . Take me if you care to take me.'"

But Vlaye does not care. He has no idea of ruining himself for Christina and upsetting the peace of his respectable married *ménage*.

"She . . . stood there irresolute, feeling that what she wanted, really, was to leave him and start fair. . . . But she had not a notion how to do it, how to, even, get out of the room, though the door was not locked. . . .

"The painter put his hand to his forehead. . . .

"'Put your hat on and run away, there's a good girl,' he said."

That is what life does to Christina, who, in her desperate youth, is so reckless and uncompromising,

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alternately self-betraying and betrayed. It is on Virgilia's wedding-day, in the hall at Davenant Villa, that Christina meets her fate.

"She looked at him coolly, using her own weapon, her large, squarely formed, deep brown disconcerting eyes. . . .

"They were, for the moment, pitted against each other. . . .

"She criticised his mouth, revealed now in turn as he was speaking to her—jagged and indeterminate at the corners, as if at some time it had been bitted, and pulled and tortured. It was his mouth that had given her the notion that he was bad-tempered. There was a peak in the middle of the upper lip that seemed to shoot forwards rather cruelly when he was saying daring things that he appeared to enjoy saying. . . . He was doing it now."

The second book, *Their Hearts*—hearts of Christina and Orinthia and the hard heart of Virgilia—begins where the first ends, with Virgilia's wedding. Virgilia is removed from the scene; she is henceforth no more than a malignant influence moving in the background, spying on, and more or less plotting against Christina. Of the three sisters, Christina is the only one who possesses any sense of honour. Even Orinthia spies. There is a shocking scene where the youngest Miss Radmall and the servant Grace piece together the fragments of a compromising letter from Balfame to Christina, which Grace has found in the waste-paper basket. But on the whole Orinthia is loyal; Virgilia removed, there is the truce of God between her and Christina. Moreover, Christina, unmarried and compromised, and tortured by her middle-aged lover, is an object of pity, not of jealousy. And Orinthia marries. Reserving to herself the right of a certain shrewish comment, she becomes Christina's confidant and her protector against Virgilia and Virgilia's husband, the priggish and respectable Dukie Hall.

The story of Christina in *Their Hearts* is the story of Rosette. A more complex and mature Rosette, a Rosette more profoundly understood and more subtly analysed. Comparing *Their Hearts* with *Sooner or Later*, you realise the enormous advance that Violet Hunt has made in the art of portraiture. In *Sooner or Later* she is not only saturated, but swamped and submerged in Rosette's erotics. What with Rosette and Robert Assheton's other mistresses, *Sooner or Later* reeks with one monotonous emotion. It is the least clarified of Violet Hunt's books. There is something compelling in its savage power, its

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thick, brooding atmosphere. The figures move as in a fog, larger but more indistinct than life, exponents of the one master passion. Violet Hunt herself is overpowered and depressed by the emotions she has evoked. Her style suffers. Except in her dialogue, where she is always brilliant, vigorous, and natural, it is nerveless, monotonous. Yet somehow its nervelessness, its monotony contributes to the effect.

In the two later books we have an infinitely more competent Violet Hunt, mature, detached, consummately observant. Orinthia, Virgilia, Christina, Mrs. Radmall, are drawn with a remorseless sincerity and understanding. Never for one moment does she allow her imagination to do violence to reality. If Christina is her heroine she holds no brief for her; she sees her as she is, with all her cleverness, her frankness and generosity, her boundless capacity for surrender, and with all her stupidity, her self-conscious affectations, her obstinacy, her power to irritate and madden. We see Christina's fascination, but her fascination is not brought forward to obscure her essential tiresomeness. We are made to understand thoroughly why she and Rosette, her prototype, cannot keep their men. Assheton says of Rosette

"This girl I am telling you of was quite the poorest tactician I ever knew. Always driving things into corners, forcing the note, incapable of letting a thing slide. . . . . Day by day I watched her knocking nails into her own coffin."

It is all part of their perversity that they should fasten on the kind of man who becomes brutal in the presence of suffering and is implacable to tears.

Only in one respect is the earlier novel superior to its two successors. The figure of the middle-aged lover, Robert Assheton, is positively a finer bit of portraiture than that of Euphan Balfame. He is more distinctly realised in detail; there is more in him; his utterances are more vital and authentic. It is as if Violet Hunt had pulled Robert Assheton to bits, lost most of them, and used the rest to build up Euphan Balfame. He is real as far as he goes, but he does not go quite far enough. He has nothing comparable with Robert Assheton's *cri de cœur:*

"'I can't, I can't! Let me go!'"

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Still, in spite of Balfame's comparative incompleteness, *Their Hearts* remains the more finished and maturer work. It is life seen from more angles than one. There is nothing in *Sooner or Later* to stand beside the portraits of Victoria and Henry Radmall, of Virgilia, of Orinthia. Nothing, not even in *White Rose* (except the great railway accident scene), to compare with the death and burying of Henry Radmall. In the cemetery nobody pays any attention to Christina. Only the old friend of the family, Izzy Farsight, comes up to her where she stands deserted, as everybody is going away.

"Christina did not shrug it off, but endured Miss Izzy's arm around her shoulder that she stiffened suddenly. . . .

"The shadow of a great loneliness fell upon her. Kind friends—yes, but no one who really belonged to her . . . . never. . . . For frankly weeping, tottering a little, leaning on the arms of love that was not disallowed, her two sisters had suffered their husbands to lead them away into the wilderness."

Thus, with an effect of utter predetermined finality, Christina's love-cycle moves between her sister's wedding and her father's funeral.

And the art of it—at first sight there is none. These two books are formless. The story wanders on from time to time and from place to place, moves backwards as much as forwards. The same episodes repeat themselves for no apparent reason. A chance association will fire a train of otherwise irrelevant reminiscence. I have spoken of scenes, but there are no scenes, no big "situations." Nothing is set; there is no working up to a climax. The style is at times jerky; it goes bumping on like a half-filled 'bus on an uneven road. At times it has the slip-shod ease of a man in a smoke-room, telling his story slangily, ungrammatically, between two whisky-and-sodas. Yet it carries you along; it gets there; the story holds you. The thing is colourless; it has no rhythm, no cadence. But neither has it any affectations or devices; it is the simplest, most innocent style imaginable. There is no beating heart in it, not even the stifled heart-beats of *Sooner or Later*. That is to say, there are no strong emotions.

And yet, by stroke upon little stroke, by touches almost imperceptible, a tremendous, poignant effect of reality is reached. These are the naked thoughts, the naked lives of people we have known; these figures, built up by means

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so unobtrusive, so inconsiderable, have the solid pressure of flesh and blood. Some of them, George Day, John Dempster, Dukie Hall, Euphan Belfame, may be incomplete, but they are never shadowy. The women are finished to the last eyelash.

Have we any right to complain of a method, a phrasing, that has, after all, done its work so well?

So far we have seen nothing in Violet Hunt but the psychological realist working competently within a narrow range, limiting herself to the presentation of sophisticated urban or suburban types and the society of Bohemia, high or low. There is nothing in these novels to make us suspect the existence in her of a grim northern imagination and of power to deal with the uncanny and the macabre. Nothing by which we might have divined the author of *Tales of the Uneasy*.

When I read these tales I find myself wondering what wild turn Violet Hunt's talent might have taken if she had never lived in London, never seen Fleet Street, but had been brought up, like Emily Brontë, in the Yorkshire country of her people and had never left their moors. *The Telegram*, *The Prayer*, *The Barometer*, *The Coach*, *The Tiger-Skin* show an imagination of the uncanny that is almost genius. I am told that *The Prayer* was the first story she ever wrote. If this was an indication of her true bent, she has been warped from it by education and environment.

The Barometer, *The Operation*, and the *Tiger-Skin* are more mature. The first two are terse, swift, concentrated; there is the greatest possible economy of means to ends. *The Barometer* is worked up in fifteen short pages to a climax of pity and terror. It is the story of two children terrified by a foreboding. They are afraid of the room they sleep in,

"brooded over by the enormous over-arching elm-tree. Its branches tapped the little skylight panes when it was windy, but now they hung still, like a drooping banner in a calm."

A thunderstorm is brewing. The children implore their mother to take them into her own bed. She refuses. You feel the shuddering of their fear, you hear their crying.

They go up to their bedroom under the sloping roof. In the night the tree draws down the lightning; it strikes

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through the roof and kills the children. Old Hannah, the servant, goes up to wake them.

"The first thing she saw, before she screamed, was the wide, jagged hole in the rafters above the bed where they still lay in each other's arms. . . . They were quiet and unchanged, except for some little blue marks like shot in the forehead of the one and the breast of the other."

There is not a word that could be added to or taken away from this tale.

And it is so with *The Operation*, that powerful story of psychic transference. It is so with *The Coach*, that grim essay in the macabre, though here a perverse touch of the old "cleverness" interferes with the authentic thrill.

But no cleverness can spoil the terrible pathos of *The Tiger-Skin*. It is a study in morbid cruelty; a woman's cruelty to her own child. It is not technically perfect. It would have gained by a greater concentration, yet Violet Hunt has not written anything that so triumphantly and unbearably "comes off."

It is the answer to anybody who still believes in the superstition of her hardness.

I wish she would go on being grim and northern, I wish she would write more uncanny stories. The Tales and the novels are in different worlds.

If you care for nothing but beauty, beauty of subject, beauty of form and pattern, beauty of technique, you will not care for the novels of Violet Hunt. But to the lover of austere truth-telling, who would rather see things as they sometimes are than as they are not and cannot be, who prefers a natural ugliness to artificial and sentimental beauty, they will appeal by their sincerity, their unhesitating courage, their incorruptible reality.

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The Cinema and its Drama

By Gordon Craig

WHAT about it? It can be all summed up in a few notes.

1. It is nothing new; it is merely one more milestone as we go downhill . . . as we are led downhill by the nose.

The Drama in the Cinema is held to be made " of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is really made by the new school of the same old tyrants, to enslave *the mind* of the people.

It appeals to the vulgarity of most . . . the idleness of many . . . the economy of all . . . the fear of the ignorant . . . the laziness of half the world . . . the curiosity of the other half . . . the " wisdom " (*i.e.*, the pocket) of the few. Therefore it protects the few . . . and is against the many. Still it pretends to be for the people ! !

It is up to date : it has all the same after-effects as every other mind-anæsthetic has in its up-to-dateness.

The mind enslaved, the mind drugged, is the best mind to glide downhill in comfort . . . to go willingly down.

Whether we shall go uphill again . . . or rather *when* we shall go uphill is all guesswork. Individuals harness themselves to a people and drag them uphill.

* * * * * *

2. The Cinema is the most important ally of what we call " Bolshevism " that exists to-day . . . the loyal Yellow Press coming in a poor second.

It glorifies the lowest in the terms of the highest.

* * * * * *

3. All that it touches it smears.

* * * * * *

4. It is, we hear, a good commercial investment.

It is, we had better know, a fatal investment in every other way.

* * * * * *

5. It is not original . . .

Exactly as in 1541, when the most energetic and at the same time most vulgar organisers of the time conceived the idea in Paris of acting the " Old Testament " because

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they held that the people did not get enough Realism in the performance of the High Mass, so to-day do the very descendants of these energetic and vulgar impresarios find themselves and their " Realistic " theatre ousted by more energetic and more vulgar organisers holding the same opinion as their predecessors held in 1541.

As we may guess, there was money in it in those days—as we know, there is money in it in these days.

And all to enslave the Minds of the Peoples.

* * * * * *

6. The Cinema rules the People as in ancient days a degenerate Church ruled them.

The Cinema is the brat of yellow journalism.

It is quite possible to see where the Cinema steals ahead of both Theatre and Church in its adaptability to the *lowest* needs of man—the tired man—the man weary after a day's work (or even during the day's work if he likes).

The Church offered us, in its Cathedrals, Monuments to sit in.

The Stage, too, offered us Monuments for our ease in its early theatres.

Were they comfortable? I cannot say. I gather they were very comfortable. But of our comfort the Cinema, too, is not unmindful. In place of a Monument to enter we are given a real place of public convenience.

* * * * * *

7. The truth is that the old tyrannical Church was *difficile*—the Theatre became as *difficile*.

The Church expected a great deal too much from the congregation; it asked for Imagination in the listeners . . . it called for reverence in the onlookers . . . it demanded belief without showing the actual Redeemer in the flesh, without retelling the story of His personal sufferings and victory—without acting it—nothing was realised.

The Cinema asks for no exercise of the imagination—calls for no reverence other than what may gush over or dribble out in sentimentality . . . demands not belief at all except the " believe your own eyes and our limericks."

The Theatre, too, was *difficile*—although far easier than the Church. There were its faults.

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It ordered the folk to come at such and such an hour and no other. It became expensive, it became snobbish. You had to dress to go there. It became a cult when it rose from being a gaudy show, roaring or squeaking butchers, cordwainers, drapers, and other tradesmen being the actors, producers, and profiteers—folk who could seldom read a word or utter a syllable in correct English or French. It became, in short, too good. It became an "Art." It strove to "elevate the masses." And all the time it pandered to their idea of what elevation might be and wasn't. It tricked.

It might have gone on till Kingdom Come, but luckily for us all the Cinema arrived in the nick of time.

The Cinema was not *difficile* . . . anything more facile is inconceivable. It was not *difficile* when it first opened its doors, though it promises rapidly to become so.

In those days it offered these advantages, these facilities:

Cheapness. 3*d.* or 6*d.* instead of 2*s.* 6*d.* and £1 1*s.*

Evening dress was banned.

Comfort; any seat a pleasure to sit on.

Ventilation, ever improving.

The Hour was *every hour.* At 10 or 11 in the morning until 12 at night you could go in. You might say at 8 o'clock, "No, I'll not go and see a show"; and at 10 you might change your mind and see the same show . . . exactly the same.

Never disappointing, then, was the *Cinema.*

Position. No matter what your seat you saw as well as your neighbour . . . who might be duke or journalist . . . cowboy or postman.

Variety. It showed you all things . . . those in China and Africa as well as those in Rome, New York, or Mexico. Comic, Tragic, Melodramatic, Farcical.

It did "Impossible" things . . . cheaply for you.

Threepennyworth of the Impossible was no mean argument.

Beauty. You could see all the prettiest girls, gowns—nightgowns—caps—hats—shoes—furnitures—the richest mansions—ceremonies—societies—Kings and Queens even—Cardinals—famous actors.

And all this was guaranteed *dead* and *powerless* to

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paralyse with its personal magetism the occupant of the (then) 3*d.* seat.

Filmed, the Individual became fangless. Teeth drawn, claws clipped, distant . . . behind the cage as it were; and we in our 3*d.* seats bosses of the whole pack of 'em. There's *Power* for you . . . what? Yea, verily, "what ho!"

On the distant screen we saw "the movies"—Life's last squirm. This squirm sums up the charm of the facile Cinema.

* * * * * *

8. In time there will be found a much lower stratum of our sentimentality and rubbish to which it will be possible to appeal . . . but already it is doing its best and appeals to the very lowest that can be found in us.

Hence its success.

While we go willingly down the hill (and who would go uphill, for who cares for the least fatigue?)—the Cinema can always be relied on to help us down.

It can never go with us *all* the way, for in time it will put on airs . . . it is putting them on already. Yes, Mary . . . yes, Charlie . . .* It is not yet *difficile*—oh, no—but you two and those who follow in your footsteps will see to this—provided they can realise how great they are—and what a simple natural appeal they make (and you made) to the simple and natural "people."

Then alas! the Cinema will become really *difficile* and its day will be over.

But let us not fear . . . there will be always other inventions of men timed to go off pat when we press the button . . . the shareholders doing the rest.

And these will meet us, lower us, without so much effort, without so many jerks . . . man can see to it and man will. All must make for more and more perfect ease with each new century—until the bottom is reached, and then . . . then alas! there will, I'm afraid, be no hope for it—we will have to ascend or become dust.

Take it or leave it.

* Two such nice ordinary people are Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin—but the men who pull their strings spoil Mary and Charlie for one more percentage—able, nice beings their manipulators give them away to us—thus are we and they bamboozled to pay for more whisky for these Cinema Kings.

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Shutts !

By Leonard J. Simons

Only Joseph's schoolfellows can properly understand the meaning of this title; and, as Joseph is now very prosperous, he might not like the name of the school mentioned.

Joseph is now one of the richest men I know. This proves the falseness of the belief that a dreamer cannot grow rich; because Joseph was an idealist from infancy, if not before.

Joseph's father before him was full of humanitarian fervour and benevolence—a very good man in every way whenever he was sober. His mother was always good, and very cold.

When his father died of drink and his mother of a cold, Joseph found himself alone, face to face with the world which he intended to clean up and reform.

On Sundays he took a box to the park and stood on it to tell the loafers what a number of things they could do without. He spoke with knowledge as well as enthusiasm. In those days an average person could just about keep alive on one pound a week. Joseph earned six shillings, by attending to a letter-copying press. An old school friend who was learning journalism gave him a share in his room, Joseph in return cooking the breakfast and being polite to the landlady.

Most of the directors of the gold prospecting companies employing Joseph seemed to live by taking in one another's promissory notes; but there was one man of substance who had a hobby for sinking money in imaginary gold mines. He also had a daughter.

When she first came to the office she wore her golden hair all loose over her shoulders. Her fragile beauty made Joseph catch his breath, with a kind of pity that anything so delicate should be in so hard a world.

It was more than a year later that she first spoke to him. When her father had gone into the inner office she perched herself on the outer office counter and burst out with, " Was that you in the park on Sunday? "

Joseph blushed. Then she argued with him, beating

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time with her heels against the side of the counter. Her audacity shocked and fascinated him. She delighted in seeming wicked, but never seemed coarse.

Whenever she came she started the attack by calling his ideals unpractical, and he in turn would attack her cynicism. She would reply with a counter-attack, always concluding with the assertion that wealth was a practical ideal and that a man's first duty was to get money.

All this she said with a smile, a smile which crinkled up her whole face and made her ugliest sentences seem pretty. Joseph had said that he always knew that he was bound to her by that attraction which is still a mystery, in spite of psycho-analysts or materialists—making one woman to one man different from all the other women in the world. But even when his original income was multiplied by three marriage did not seem practicable.

Then he lost even his eighteen shillings a week. The solicitor of the managing director happened to be ill, so that the managing director wandered outside the law. The illness of the lawyer was not considered a good enough excuse, the managing director went to prison and the company went to pot.

During the winding-up Marguerite (she had been christened Margaret, but liked the French sound of the other) came to the office to help her father. Joseph met her on the landing with

"I say, Marguerite, I am a pauper now, without any prospects. Will you marry me?"

"You are mad!" she said, very white.

"I know I am; but what is the good of being anything else?"

She trembled and wanted to run away, but could not.

"Will you?" he persisted.

"It would be mad," she gasped. "You said so your own self."

Then her father came out of the office.

Joseph sent her a letter, but it came back with "Gone away. No address."

His friend and fellow lodger consoled him. "You ought to be able to get a good job with one of the other directors. You must know all about plenty of their shady transactions."

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"Why ever should that make them feel friendly towards me?" asked Joseph.

"Oh, go to the—park," said his friend. "Well, what are you going to do without any money?"

"I have a good deal saved up," Joseph replied.

When his friend had recovered he explained a scheme. The details were complicated; but briefly, and omitting Stock Exchange jargon, his plan was to spread reports that certain shares were worthless, buy when the prices fell, and sell after a high dividend had been declared.

From the first the scheme prospered. Sometimes they miscalculated, and they bought shares which were really worthless; but this added zest to their work. At the end of ten years Joseph had become one of the richest of outside stock-jobbers.

All the time he was on the look-out for Marguerite. He met her by chance at last in the Tube. Catching sight of her opposite him, he thought he was going to faint from a kind of suffocation. He took a deep breath, went up to her and said:

"Do you remember me?"

She looked at him in her quizzical way. "I do not really recognise you," she said, "but I believe you must be old Joseph."

After the next station they were left alone, and he asked: "Will you marry me, Marguerite? I am rich now."

"This is so sudden!" she laughed.

"I am not joking," he said. "Will you?"

"You don't know how you have changed," she said.

"My bald head, you mean?"

"No," she replied, weighing him up. "I mean that there was something fascinating about your being poor, without being ashamed of it, and my being rich. Well, I am not rich now: I just jog along comfortably; and you are not poor. I am sorry, Joseph, but there is nothing romantic about you at all, now, you know."

"I could easily get rid of my money."

"What should we live on then?" she asked calmly. "No, it would not do. I am so glad to have met you again, Joseph; but it is no good, really it is not."

Since then Joseph has gone on prospering.

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The Lesson of Bolshevism

By Judex

It is now clear that Bolshevism, as a system, has failed whether as panacea or philosophy, and though the world may not yet think so, probably the world will be the better for the experiment. Of all countries, Russia was the most suitable for applied Socialism, because (1) Russia is entirely self-feeding; (2) she is not an industrial country; (3) she has a 70 per cent. illiterate population, hence she is easily led; (4) she has immense natural resources. Thus in Russia Socialism, if it could become a working philosophy, had full and fair opportunity, and if it failed there, obviously the fault must lie in the doctrine. This is precisely what has happened. The orthodox expropriation of the expropriators (according to Marx) has been tried completely; the State became the Bank, the producer, the disintegrator, the integrator, and in two years not only has internal credit been destroyed according to plan, but production has ceased and Russia, Europe's great granary, has sunk into a starving wilderness of decay.

The reason is—human nature. Man is not a logical being. He is not an automaton, consequently pure Socialism ran up against the primordial instincts of man rooted in the soil and in the laws that govern, and must determine, the products of labour. In a word, the Russian peasantry, having no inducement to work for others, worked only for themselves. There being no cash nexus of labour, labourers became purely self-interested; the land went out of cultivation; the peasantry saw no object in working, without return, for the cities, who thus found themselves starved of food, thrown into inevitable opposition to the land workers who formed 70 per cent. of the whole. The system worked—until it broke down. Having no external credit, Russia could not buy raw or materials, and being a highly backward industrial nation, she could not manufacture. In such conditions only single effort could

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save her. It was lacking for the reasons given above. The peasantry demanded the land and, like other men, they wanted some return for their labour. The human element proved stronger than the scientific, and when nature asserted herself with a prolonged drought the fabric crashed, as in other countries it would have crashed at the end of six months.

The truth is that Marx, right in much of his diagnosis, omitted two fundamental factors: first, the human element; second, the land. His philosophy centred almost entirely upon industrialism. He did not grasp that peasants are born conservatives, natural possessors, inexorably human, and Lenin followed suit. He seems to have applied Socialism in an absolute wooden spirit, relying upon the book for guidance. He failed because he had no inducement to offer to the land workers, for to them the land meant nothing if production implied merely service. Service to the towns. It was not enough. As the difficulty became manifest, town government grew more and more tyrannical until actual antagonism broke out between the rival producing sections, like the town and country mouse of the fable. The rouble ceased to matter. Cut off from the outer world, Russia month by month declined into one-third of the population struggling to get food while the rest produced solely for its own purposes. Indeed, only a constructive land Socialism or Communism could have saved the situation, but to-day it is too late. The backward state of Russia is relentlessly against her. She has eaten up her capital, destroyed her internal purchasing power, and used up her materials. They cannot be renewed. Distribution has broken down; the railways hardly function; Russia is without skilled labour, and now the peasant is without machinery. In two years a country of immense wealth has gone to seed, is slowly decaying, sinking into ruin, and now Lenin will have to call upon Europe to rebuild and reconstruct at the expense one by one of his Socialist principles. Lenin's great mistake lay in destroying credit, whereby he severed Russia from the world. If all Europe were Socialist the system might function, but only at the price of population. In the highly industrial countries, such as England, Germany, Belgium, and even France, Socialism could only function with enormously

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reduced populations. In Britain, certainly 10,000,000 people would have to die or emigrate; in Germany, probably 15,000,000; in Belgium, 2,000,000; in France, 5,000,000, because Socialism would imply the elimination of all production of a luxury or surplus character, thereby implying the elimination of an export trade which is the strength of highly industrial peoples. Trade would be strictly utilitarian and credit would rest upon that basis. The peasant would be master, the industrial would be his servitor. Land would be the foundation of the nation's wealth, in inverse ratio to Marx's concept.

Probably 100,000,000 people in Europe would under such a system be found to be superfluous, unwanted, and parasitic, and they would have to die. In twenty years the population of Europe would sink by hundreds of millions, for every third child would be a doubtful quantity; in fact, population and its regularisation would become the immediate concern of the Socialist State. To return to Lenin.

He might have controlled capital—thus individual wealth—or sequestered capital for the time, but in destroying capital as a function of exchange he cut his own throat and that of the peasantry, who see no object in working to feed the town populations without return; also he deprived Russia and the towns of all means of running their own industries. No doubt he speculated on general revolution—an extraordinary mistake—and so we find Kautsky, the ardent, life-long Marxian theorist of Germany, to-day the fiercest of anti-Bolshevists, and in Germany everywhere an implacable determination to repudiate Lenin and his creed and at all costs to uphold the world's mechanism in defiance of Socialist doctrine.

Here we have an experiment and its human answer. It is the workers of the world who really reject Bolshevism, who believe in capital, who condemn further experiment: the lesson should not be lost here. We of all nations can least afford the destruction of our economic mechanism, or any interference in the economic laws which govern the stability of a nation compelled to buy 50 per cent. of its food from abroad. We of all peoples can least afford to strike at the surplus wealth which maintains some 10,000,000 of our people, for were we to crash, the collapse

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of the entire wealth produce of these islands would involve us in immediate ruin. And that this is apparent we can see in our own economic troubles. The elimination of Russia, as seller and buyer, has impoverished Europe positively, us in particular. The world is so interdependent to-day that any one isolation affects the whole; indeed we may say with absolute truthfulness that the recovery of Britain will depend upon the recovery of Russia and Central Europe, and that unless these great customers do recover in the near future, we as an export country must inevitably decline, and literally some millions of our people will have to emigrate.

It is not a problem of money or capital, but of credit. We can *change or modify the capitalist system*, alter the basis of currencies, invent a new standard of money measurement—all that is not only feasible, but may become necessary. The problem is credit—distribution, the balance of wealth. A nation that cannot buy cannot live. There must be an exchange measurement and there must be some token of credit, which in reality means confidence.

Under rigid Socialism there can be no credit, as Lenin discovered. A nation might experiment with a highly intensive system of controlled capital and succeed, provided it maintained the mechanism of credit abroad unimpaired, and it was because Lenin destroyed that basis that Russia clogged her own arteries. What we then find to-day is the visible failure of applied Socialism precisely there where it had the best opportunities to succeed. The fact is of great social importance. If the proof lies in the eating, we cannot shut our eyes to the startling evidence now before humanity, for that evidence is convincing enough. That Lenin will have to return to credit is to-day a certainty. He will be compelled to do this to save Russia from chronic famine and disaster, which, if continued, will reduce that country to a land of skeletons. It is a terrible testimony, yet one which mankind can turn to advantage if the right lessons are learnt. What are these lessons?

They are, primarily, the ruthless logic of economic laws which we tamper with at our peril. They are that man is a human animal, neither logical nor mechanical, and that human nature requires inducement. They are

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that the world is interdependent and that wealth is in the truest sense international. They are that credit is indispensable and that the stability of credit is alike indispensable to all. They are that economic laws govern to-day and that in war the nations destroy one another. They are that Socialism, as a creed, is not workable, for its application implies the pauperisation of the very classes it was intended to liberate. They are, finally, that the genius of man must be free or mankind will perish.

One important point remains to be touched on—the Blockade. Russia has been actually at war ever since 1914, subjected to constant invasion since the Armistice and continuously blockaded. The questions arise: Did Lenin have a fair chance for his Socialist experiment? Would he have succeeded had Russia not been blockaded?

The answer must be in the negative, for just as it was the financial blockade of Central Europe that led to the enemy breakdown in 1918, so Russia, by cutting off credit, blockaded herself, trade being virtually impossible with her, and that quite apart from Allied Governmental hostility. Lenin knew Russia's industrial backwardness; he was perfectly cognisant of the incapacity of Russians as engineers, as skilled artisans, as business men, as traders, and he inherited the Tsarist system of rottenness which had already collapsed. Blockade or not, he must have realised that what Russia needed was efficient organisation; was engineering capacity; was industrial output, and that precisely those qualities were completely lacking. The Germans in Russia, who ran so many of Russia's industries, were gone, and as Russia could not make machinery, boots, locomotives, etc., she would have to purchase these or go without. She chose to go without. Under a controlled capitalist system, Lenin could have done foreign business; could have restarted the machine; could no doubt have preserved internal Socialism; but without credit, he found himself isolated, and as internal credit broke he found that the land had no interest in the cities or the cities in the land, in this wise destroying the unit of service without which a nation must fall into chaos.

The truth is that Lenin did not complete his circle: he made the same mistake over Socialism that Governments

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made over reparations. He had the enthusiasm behind him. He thought that money as the token of exchange did not signify; Governments at Paris thought that money was the only thing that did signify. Nor was this vital point elucidated in Marx's *Capital*: who stopped his thinking at the bursting of the capitalist integument, as if that was sufficient. Now it is at that point that constructive thought begins. It is always the afterwards that matters, and Lenin ignored it. His belief that barter would catch on was ingenuous, and so his experiment failed not because of our Blockade, but because Russia internally was not qualified to run herself industrially without foreign brains, aid, and efficiency, and externally he had deprived her of all contributory assistance. It is not capital as such that is the evil; it is the inequity of capitalist distribution. It is not our token that is wrong, but the handling of the token. In other words, the purest Socialist State must function on capital or credit of some kind, or decay exactly as Russia has decayed, having no credit nexus.

His economic experiment was political. He used Russia to influence and infect Europe. He forgot the elasticity of paper credit. He failed to see that a negation is only a step or means towards a positive, and that in neglecting the constructive side of economics he had produced not, as he thought, a finality, which does not exist, but a condition involving stagnation contrary to the law of life, which in all things, in thought, in truth, in conception, is *movement*. Now he is moving on, moving back. To what? That is Europe's problem. But we can already discern this: whatever form the evolution of capitalist mechanism may take, it must be in the direction of movement; it cannot be the destruction of credit or means of exchange. The gold standard system may go as the result of the war; some system of credit there will have to be, and when Lenin is ready to acquiesce in that truth the recovery of Russia will begin.

It is for British Labour now to draw right inferences and realise them. Bolshevism will shortly vanish. As we emerge from the present welter we shall discover that salvation does not lie in another tyranny or in any short cut to freedom, which of course does not exist. Man's only freedom is his intelligence. Thus progress is essen-

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tially evolutionary, for all subversion leads back but to more tyranny and subjection, eventually to the process of working back and upwards again.

When Lenin returns to credit, Europe will no doubt shake off the nightmare of fear which still dims its vision, and we shall see once more a course. Meanwhile it is right that we should reconsider our respective theories in the light of Russia's experience. The problem is the inequity of the distribution of wealth. As we have seen, Socialism does not solve this problem, it intensifies it. The question before Europe is how to get back to work and normal distribution, and in the solution of this great work British Labour assuredly will have to face full responsibility both towards itself and the State, or as a political power it will fail, caught in the wheels of its own sterilisation. Socialism may still be a creed; as a practical philosophy it is *de facto* an anachronism, and if Labour recognises that truth it will inevitably become the stay and inspiration of England.

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Nigger-lip

By Baroness Von Hutten

Told by James Marcham.

Garmish was forty before he made his first important discovery, and I always thought that, in the matter of his marriage, his sudden success must have gone to his head a little. At forty he was already fat and nearly bald, and his large pink face, that in his youth had looked as though it might have hidden a promising bony structure, now had an unattractive air of hiding nothing at all but layers of blubber.

It was only his smile that saved him from something very near repulsiveness, and his smile was slow, and of really singular sweetness. It may have been the smile that captured Lavinia Street, but I, who never liked her, always thought it was the glamour of his sudden and amazing celebrity that made her marry him.

He went to bed one night in the 'nineties an obscure G.P. on the outskirts of Harley Street, and woke up famous as the man who had discovered the Germ of Japanese Lockjaw. All the big doctors took him up, the papers were full of him, and a few months afterwards he married—at St. George's, Hanover Square, of course—the Honourable Lavinia Street, third daughter of Lord Square.

I saw a good deal of them just after their marriage, and there can be no doubt that he was deeply in love with his wife. She was a very dark woman—her grandmother had been a Syrian—with the glossiest hair, dead-black, that I have ever seen, banded over her ears from a parting. An ivory-coloured woman, but with eyes of the darkest blue, and an odd, absent look in them.

I knew of her that she was cold, unaffectionate, and a born liar, and before they had been married a year I knew that poor Garmish bored her to tears.

For about eighteen months, however, things went well enough on the surface. Then the strain began to show, for the poor devil had, as the saying goes, failed to make good, and his money began to give out, and then, finally,

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he undertook, at his own expense, some immensely expensive discovery for the Government, failed in it, and went to pieces completely.

" I don't mind much myself, Marcham," he said to me when I went to see him, " a quiet life in a country town is what my nerves need, and—I shall soon get to work again on something really important, but—there's poor Lavvy to think of——"

" Poor Lavvy's job's to think of your disappointment," I answered, not bothering to feign the sympathy I didn't feel for the little selfish thing, " besides, it'll do her good too, she looks fagged and pale——"

" Yes. She is restless. But the country, to her, means a big country house and amusing neighbours, whereas the best I can do is Framlington-under-Sayle, and I own it's a pretty dreadful place. However——"

The Garmishes went to Framlington and lived there nearly four years. I met Garmish only once during the interval, and that was on Crewe Station, where we were both changing trains. At Crewe—it was about a year after they left London—he told me that things were going pretty well, though all his time was taken up by his patients, and added, rather pathetically, I thought, that I should see his wife in her new surroundings. " You never cared much for Lavinia, but you'd admire her now," he said.

Nearly three years later I was surprised by receiving from him a telegram containing what seemed to me a most singular request:

" At any expense try to find me a nigger from Morambazi, West Coast Africa. East End Sailors' Lodging House most hopeful."

My own hobby being quite irrelevant to this story, I will say only that in its furtherance I had spent a good deal of time in the East End, and knew rather more than most people about sailors' lodging houses (although Africans are altogether out of my line). So in a few hours' time I was within a minute's walk of the docks, where I found an old Chinaman, a very old friend of mine, and told him my errand.

He shook his head gravely, assuring me that it would be very hard to find a nigger from any particular place in Africa.

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" Allee same ' niggers '—p'laps no can do——"

He promised to try, nevertheless, and for a few days we worked, I acting on his orders. On the fifth day, just as I was preparing to set out again, my servant (naturally agitated) announced in his most genteel voice that a black person was at the door, wishing to see me. The man was a big fellow, remarkably muscular, and rather prepossessing. He was cleanly dressed, and spoke good English.

" Chinese gentleman sent me, sir," he said, looking round my room with simple interest.

" You come from Morambazi, in Africa? "

" Yes, sir. My father big chief Morambazi."

" Are you a sailor? "

He shook his great woolly head. " Ship's doctor, sir."

It struck me as odd that so powerful a man should not have chosen a job more energetic than that of cook, but it was no business of mine, and that afternoon I sent him off to Framlington. The next day I had an exultantly thankful wire from Garmish, and that, so far as I was concerned, was the last of the matter for months.

It was in June, I think, that on opening my *Daily Mail* I saw the announcement of Garmish's new discovery—the *Daily Mail* even gave it the honour of a capital D.

The article had plainly been written by one of Mr. Alfred Harmsworth's Best Young Men, for it was not only an announcement, it was a concise and almost picturesque description of that fell disease, " Nigger-lip "—an affliction of which I had until that day lived in happy ignorance. Whole countrysides (African) had, since the world began, been devastated by Nigger-lip; doctors of all nations had sacrificed their lives in fruitless attempts to discover its source, or invent a cure for it.

It was, in short, though but little known to home-staying whites, almost comparable, in its comparatively restricted area, to leprosy. And now Garmish (whom the Best Young Man had not forgotten, even in his four years' retirement in Framlington) had, it seemed, succeeded in discovering its germ!

I wrote and congratulated him, but had no reply, and it was only on my return from Brittany, in late October, that we met. He looked well, though he had grown very

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fat, and his little rust-coloured eyes glowed with satisfaction and happiness. We lunched together at a City chop house, and though he refused to talk of his discovery, on the reasonable ground of my inability to understand it, he told me many other things.

He had taken a house in Queen Anne Street, his wife was very busy furnishing it, and I was soon to come to dine.

" You'll have to own up about Lavvy," he added, with a touch of pride, " she's been wonderful."

Now Lavvy bored me, so as I helped myself to cheese I asked politely whether her health was as much improved as his own.

His face fell a little. " No—I'm sorry to say it is not, Marcham. She's very nervous, and sleeps badly. What I meant was that she has been a perfect—*brick* in that awful town."

" Any neighbours? "

" None," he answered with a curious touch of humble snobbishness, " of her own class. Brewers and cotton-people, and so on. Awfully dull they all were, and I own up I just let 'em all slide. But Lavvy accepted the inevitable far better than I did, and went to their boring dinners and dances as if she'd never seen anything better in her life."

In other words, I thought, she had let him grind and work at home, and amused herself exactly as she liked!

Still, I could not help admitting to my prejudiced self that Mrs. Garmish had at least shown to me an unexpected amount of decency in sticking to Framlington at all, so it was with a mixture of dislike, appreciation, and curiosity that I rang at the lady's door at dinner-time a few evenings later. Five minutes after we were seated at table I knew the reason for Lavinia Garmish's abnegation.

His name was Archie Wellcome, he was a young Framlington brewer, and he was, without exception, the handsomest fellow I have ever seen. He sat nearly opposite me between two middle-aged beauties of social distinction, both of whom, I felt sure, would, at the smallest sigh from him, have flown to the ends of the earth with him, and in an absolutely inimitable way he made love to them both.

An amazing young man!

As the to me so fruitful words—" Oh, yes, I live in

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Framlington "—fell from his Apollo-like lips, I glanced quickly at my hostess, and—there was the whole story, written in her beautiful ivory-coloured face, in which the delicate bones began to be faintly indicated. Naturally, I thought, under *those* circumstances, she could put up with a drudging husband in a dull town!

Most of the guests left fairly early, to go to some dance, and young Wellcome and I stayed on, I by Mrs. Garmish's expressed wish, Wellcome by Garmish's.

" You and Tom can have one of your tiresome chemical talks," she said to Wellcome, " while Major Marcham and I try to pick up lost threads."

Garmish rubbed his fat hands, well pleased by her cordiality, and took Adonis to his study to show him some new book or paper, and Mrs. Garmish and I sat by the fire.

For an hour or so we lied politely to each other, and then, when Garmish and Wellcome came back, I rose and made my escape.

At the door I heard Wellcome say, rather loudly, " Well, Mrs. Garmish, I've got the Kodak for you, but I must be off in a moment."

On the landing Garmish shook hands with me. " I'd go to the door with you," he said kindly, " but I've a lot of work to get through before I go to bed."

" Won't Mrs. Garmish be bored by that beauteous youth? " I asked, " he hasn't much brain."

" Not she! She likes him, Lavvy does. His people were her best friends in Framlington, and they are great pals. Besides," he added, " he's no fool, Archer. They're beer people, you know, and he is very much interested in chemistry and so on. I've been able to give him one or two rather good tips about beer, so we are all very friendly."

That autumn I saw a good deal of Tom Garmish, and the more I saw the better I liked.

It was plain that he still adored his good-for-nothing little wife, and trusted her utterly; he was a good friend, a simple-minded, decent fellow. As a G.P. he was, I heard on good authority, only mediocre, and he himself attributed much of his success to luck.

" I go tumbling along," he said one evening, just before Christmas, at dinner, " groping, feeling, and then all of a sudden a shutter seems to open, and I *know*."

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He paused, his fat face thoughtful, his eyes squeezed half shut. "It's just that, Marcham—I just suddenly know—don't I, Wellcome?"

Wellcome, who was the only other guest, stirred uneasily and then, with much enthusiasm, agreed.

I glanced at Mrs. Garmish.

She was very beautiful that night, in some thin silk the colour of red currants seen against the light. Long dingle-dangle earrings of the same colour hung from her invisible ears nearly to her shoulders.

She met my eyes and gave a nervous laugh. "It's quite true, Major Marcham," she said hastily, "he gets all in a fog, and then, like a shot, he knows——"

I have no idea why I said the foolish thing I did say, but say it I did.

"Wouldn't it be awful?" I asked her, laughing, "if he quite suddenly knew all about *us*?"

Archie Wellcome changed colour, and for one second Garmish watched his face. Then Mrs. Garmish cried gaily that "she for one had no secrets, but that she suspected *me* of hideous things!"

There was a little pause, and then someone said something, and the subject was changed. But it had been an unforgettable moment, and we all knew that none of us could ever forget it.

Early in January I met Garmish at the British Museum, and was struck by a change in his face. He looked fatter, but something dangerous seemed in cover behind the yellowish folds about his eyes.

"I've been ill," he said impatiently, in answer to my question—"digestion." After a moment, as if forced to utter the words against his will, he asked me, "Marcham, have you seen anything of Archie Wellcome lately?"

"Good gracious, no, Garmish, why should I?"

He looked discontentment with himself. "Of course, of course," he murmured. "Why should you? I—I only asked because he has quite given up coming to our house."

"Perhaps he's gone back to his beer."

"No, no—he's in town. *Never* mind," he went on in a different voice, "it's of no importance."

We walked along together, and then to my horror he again stood still, and, looking me straight in the eyes, said

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slowly: " If—if anyone did that to me I should destroy him."

At that minute a man he knew came round from the other side of the Egyptian sarcophagus before which we stood, and I hurriedly took leave of him and escaped from the building. It had been very odd, and extraordinarily unpleasant, the little incident, and I tried to forget it, but I could not. His words had seemed at once a declaration of suspicion and an announcement of something decided upon and concrete.

" ' I'd *kill* him,' " I reflected, making my way westward through a chill flurry of dirty snow. " Sounds vague, and—absurd, but to say he would *destroy* was—dreadful."

Selfishly, I made up my mind to avoid Queen Anne Street for the present.

It was a matchless May night when the next thing happened. In the interim I had seen Mrs. Garmish twice, at parties, and Garmish, who had been to some kind of a Germ Congress at Vienna, only once. On this occasion other people had been present, and we had exchanged only a few indifferent words. I thought he looked as if he were suffering, but he was very successful, those days, having just given the *Daily Mail* word-painter occasion to eulogise him about some other discovery, and as his wife was with him, and they seemed on good terms, I decided that he was only over-worked.

That time was in March, and now came the May evening—or rather night, for the thing happened well after midnight, on my way home from a ball, where I had been helping my sister steer her only daughter through her introduction to society. The moonlight lay thick over my dingy London street, and I remember I was singing a waltz to myself as I reached my door.

Just as I paused and felt for my latchkey a huge man rose from the shadow of the house and rushed towards me. He looked, for a second, like some gruesome phantom, for while his face was as black as a coal, his mouth was covered with a narrow white bandage.

As I started back he clasped his huge hands and made rather dreadful sounds of supplication that I could not disregard.

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"Who are you?" I asked, "can I—do anything for you?"

In answer he backed a few steps into the moonlight and bent his face for me to look at—for me to recognise. And I did recognise him. It was the nigger from Morambazi. I took him upstairs, and while I opened my door and turned on the lights he took off his bandages and turned to me, with his shabby, decent hat so held that his mouth and chin were hidden.

He thanked me in an odd voice for admitting him, and sat down, his yellow and black eyes full of supplication, gazing at me over the hat.

"What is the trouble? How can I help you?" I said as quietly as I could.

"Boss," he answered, still with the curious voice and seeming difficulty of articulation, "I very sick. Want see doctor you sent me to——"

"Dr. Garmish?"

"Yes, sir. Must see him. Forgot where he lives. You tell me. He cure me. Oh, my Gawd blast me," he cried with a wail, springing to his feet, "he gotta cure me——"

There was something perfectly horrible in his voice and in the way, even in his frenzy of excitement and misery, the poor fellow never forgot to hold that old hat before his face!

Before I could speak he cleared his throat, sat down, and said much more distinctly, "Boss, I got it. Nigger-lip."

We walked to Queen Anne Street, for it would have been brutal to keep the poor devil waiting, and I knew Garmish, who in all possibility would be hard at work, was grateful to the man for having given him some information he needed in his researches for the Nigger-lip germ.

And it was as I thought. Garmish opened the door himself, and when he recognised us took us silently to his study.

"You poor fellow," he said to the negro, who stood patiently by the door while he arranged the lights. "So you have got it!"

The nigger nodded, but did not attempt to speak, and Garmish turned to me. "Look here, Marcham," he said, "it was good of you to bring him, but you'd better go now. It—it won't be pleasant——"

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I stayed, however, and he placed the man so that he could throw a strong shaft of electric light on his face.

" I—I've never actually *seen* it myself," he told me as he made his preparations, " it—is very interesting——"

While he undid the bandage the piteous eyes of the negro gazed into my face. " Better go, sir," he murmured, " better go——"

Garmish dropped the bandage a second or so before I realised it, so huge and white were the immense, snow-white teeth that alone replaced its whiteness. Then I believe I must have cried out, for Garmish said quietly, " Whisky on the table, Marcham."

The matter was that the negro had no mouth.

Over his great teeth there was no vestige of lip.

No words could possibly express the horror of it, and I made an utter fool of myself as I got the whisky.

" The worst is over, my poor man," I heard Garmish's voice saying. " It has stopped."

Then that nigger cried, sobbed like a baby, his dreadful face hidden in his hat, and Garmish turned to me.

" I warned him not to go home—to Morambazi—but he went, and he's had it. Poor devil! "

" Nigger-lip? " I gasped.

He nodded. " Yes. It's a very curious thing—professionally a beautiful case——"

" But what *is* it? "

He explained that it was, roughly speaking, a sort of local leprosy. " As you see," he added, " it eats the lips quite away with the first attack——"

He gave the man some whisky, a prescription, and a five-pound note, and sent him very kindly away.

Shortly after I, too, went home to bed, but not to sleep.

Julius Wilkins, as the negro called himself, was for some weeks in bed, and then Garmish sent him home.

" It will kill him, because he will get more attacks," he said to me, " but no one anywhere else could stand that face, and at least he'll die among his own people." Then, with that seeming callousness of doctors, he added, rubbing his hands, " anyhow, I've got a culture of the damned thing—the only one in Europe so far as I know! "

He rang me up one evening in late June. " I want you, Marcham," he said curtly, " come at once."

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" I can't, I'm dining with——"

" It doesn't matter if you are dining with God Almighty," he returned, " I need you."

When I got to the house I was shown at once to the library, where Garmish, in evening dress, stood by the fire. His face was ghastly and the yellow fat seemed to have slipped into his shirt-collar, leaving his hitherto invisible bones almost naked.

" My wife is Archie Wellcome's mistress," he said quietly, " and I am going to punish him."

" Then I am going home, Tom," I returned in a voice to match his, " for I can do no good."

At that moment the door-bell rang and I heard Wellcome's delightful voice speaking to the butler.

" You'll stay, Tom." Garmish opened a drawer in his writing-table as he spoke, and his charming smile stirred his wrecked face for an instant.

Then we went into the drawing-room and found there only Mrs. Garmish and Wellcome, standing together near the open, flower-filled window. The two men shook hands, Wellcome obviously uncomfortable, Garmish, despite his ghastly face, much in his usual way, as he reproached his guest for his long neglect.

" We have missed you, my wife and I," he added, " haven't we, Lavinia? "

She nodded. She should not have worn jade earrings that evening, for she was ghastly.

Then we went in to dinner.

To my surprise Garmish, who never talked shop, at once began on the subject of his various discoveries, dilating in an almost boastful way on his luck.

" I seem all in a fog," he went on, " utterly stupid,—almost blind,—yes, *blind*,—and then, all of a sudden,—all of a sudden the fog lifts, and—*I know*."

There was a pause, and we all dropped our masks, for it would have been pure inability to pretend to misunderstand him. I sat on his left, and consequently Archie Wellcome was at his right hand. Before anyone could speak the butler came into the room and Garmish took from his pocket a small leather photograph case.

" Remember that poor brute of a sea-cook with Nigger-lip, Marcham? " he said calmly.

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I shuddered. "*I do.*"

"Well, here are the photographs of him. You may go, Martin," he added to the butler. "I'll ring——" He handed the case to me as the door closed, and I, without looking at it, passed it to his wife, who gazed for a moment at the awful face twice represented in it, and then, half-fainting, fell back in her chair with a choked cry.

The case fell to the floor, and Wellcome spoke. "Really, Garmish," he began, blustering a little as he rose, "you have made Mrs. Garmish quite ill——"

"Pick up the case and look at the pictures," was Garmish's almost whispered answer, and Wellcome obeyed.

As he looked, his beautiful face literally as white as Pentilic marble, Garmish leaned quietly towards him and made a little stabbing movement at his left wrist.

"What the devil——"

Garmish rose, holding up for us to see it, a small hypodermic syringe, half full of a dull yellowish fluid.

"I have inoculated you," he said, smiling, "with Nigger-lip. In a month you, like the man in the photograph, will have no mouth."

Mrs. Garmish cried out in terror, and Wellcome stood staring at the white fleck on his wrist.

"My wife," Garmish added slowly, "will never kiss you again."

He then handed me the half full syringe, bidding me keep it untouched till it was wanted, and left the room.

After a most horrible five minutes I could bear no more, and followed him, but he had left the house, and I went home and got blind drunk.

Three weeks later the evening papers were full of the inexplicable suicide of Mr. Archie Wellcome, who had shot himself in the woods near his father's house in Cheshire.

I sent my man out to buy all the evening papers, and read them all, but there was not a word in one of them referring to any disfigurement or disease.

After several days' careful inquiries I recognised the truth, that the fellow had simply been scared to death!

In corroboration of my theory Garmish himself turned up at my rooms one morning a few days later. He was quite calm, and looked much better than he had looked that horrible evening, but his face looked older and harder.

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" I've been in Berlin," he told me, " interesting work in my line always going on there——"

" I suppose you know you killed Wellcome? " I burst out.

" Wellcome committed suicide, his beauty unblemished," he answered slowly. " I told you I'd destroy anyone who did that to me, but I'm no murderer."

After a pause he said abruptly, " Where's that syringe? "

I gave it to him, and he looked at it for a while in thoughtful silence.

" I'm back in Queen Anne Street," he went on presently, " and Dr. and the Honourable Mrs. Garmish will continue to live as usual."

Then he jabbed the needle into his fat wrist and drove the little piston home. " That's just to convince *you*," he said with a vestige of a smile. " *She* knows."

Another pause, and he added, without expression, " His mother sent her a photograph of him *taken after death*—' in memory of their beautiful friendship! ' "

Neither of us spoke for a moment. There seemed very little to say. Then he rose and held out his hand. I took it, and, in a few words that I forget, we took leave of each other.

We both knew, and it was unnecessary to express the knowledge, that we could never purposely meet again.

His wife was clever enough to bow rather effusively whenever we saw each other at bowing distance, and we of course both took good care to avoid close meetings.

Sir Thomas Garmish and I are old now. He is a very famous man, and I a comfortably obscure one.

Last November Lady Garmish died, and I went to the funeral. It was a dripping wet day, and, as we left the poor thing there in her grave, he, to my surprise, came and took my arm.

" Come home with me, Jim," he said, his heavy old face bent towards me, " there's no longer any reason why you shouldn't, and," he added simply, " in spite of everything—I shall be lonely."

Every Saturday I dine with him, and after dinner we play chess.

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THEATRE-CRAFT

Editors: Hermon Ould and Horace Shipp

The Contemporary Theatre

By Horace Shipp

THERE is a *Punch* legend of a lady who didn't "mind music even though it is good as long as it has a tune in it," and for the guidance of those who risk prophetic reputations and those who venture fortunes in the theatre it would be more than interesting to know what is the equivalent in drama of that "tune." Whatever the mysterious quality is, it is inherent in *The Truth about Blayds*, and no small part of the interest of a recent evening at the Globe came from a study of the reactions of the audience. It was not that audience which recurringly forgathers at highbrow private productions, but was obviously the British Public—quite British and quite public. The point of fascination was that the subtleties of the play, the literary *bons mots*, were appreciated equally with the excellent extravagances of Dion Boucicault. A "Whistler" story, worthy of his authorship and directed against Swinburne, raised a laugh which would have satisfied the Barbed Butterfly in his vanity. So throughout the first and second acts, construction, wit, situation, and human interest seemed alike to grip the audience. Then unaccountably the play went to pieces in a desperate attempt to steer its problem to the happy ending demanded by the tenets of theatrical "wisdom."

The first act, with its rich literary flavour, its pathos, its hero worship, and the comedy and tragedy of lives subjected or sacrificed to the poet Blayds, with its deeper note of the daughter Isobel's sacrifice, not for the man, but for the beauty which he was bringing into the world; the

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second act of disillusionment, when Isobel tells of Blayds' confession before his death that the great reputation was built on manuscript stolen from his dead friend: these in design and in detail were gripping and fascinating, and the people depicted were undeniably vital. Mr. Milne's effort to disentangle the situation in the manner of the comedy tradition frankly failed. The machinery which hauled Isobel's lover back on to the stage creaked abominably; it creaked anew at the opportune discovery of the missing will of the wronged man which solved one-half of the difficulties of the Blayds family. The fine note which had made Isobel significant was quite quietly lost, and the truth about Blayds, that he was an opportunist who placed honour well to the rear of convenience, became a family trait. Mr. Milne did not believe it; three at least of his characters as he first depicted them could not have accepted the solution; and, as I have said, the audience accepted it in their admiration for an otherwise good play.

The acting was brilliant; it needs must have been with such a cast. I hope that the success of the play will encourage Mr. Milne to write his next with a single eye to the truth inherent in his characters. *The Truth about Blayds* succeeds as a human story written around a social theme. Of the genre which we call Repertory, its standards are those of actuality and the life around us. It is a type which English dramatists have cultivated well, and which, as this play proves, can find an English audience.

In another sphere of theatrical art is *Prunella*, and one is forced to wonder why it is that a play so delightful cannot seem to attract to a like degree. The revival of the play at the Everyman Theatre should easily have filled this intimate theatre as often as the management cared to put it into the bill. It is a charming fantasy, charmingly conceived, and one would say that if an audience exists for such a theatre as the Everyman (and surely it does exist) *Prunella* should have lured it there.

The fault of the play (which the production on this occasion tended to emphasise) lies in its indecision between realism and pure fantasy. *Prunella* is a chance for stylistic production. The best moments of the play are those of fantasy, those which are governed by the laws of art rather than those of life. At Hampstead life continually rioted into the Dutch garden. Again the instinct of the audience

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was right, for they loved Quaint with her conventionalised gestures, and they loved the symmetrical somnolence of the three aunts; they did not like the too real and untidy group of Mummers. The Fountain Figure will serve as a parable: looking at Norman Macdermott's model as it was reproduced in an early issue of THEATRE-CRAFT, the figure was sternly conventionalised; at the Everyman Theatre it was obviously human, and although the play ascribes it to a French sculptor it were a pity to spoil the excellent set by making it look faithful to such an unpromising origin. A mask would have saved the situation. One is thankful, however, for the opportunity of seeing this delightful play again, and criticism is allied with gratitude.

The opening of the year witnessed the phenomenon of simultaneous productions of *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Court Theatre and at the Old Vic. Which, with the success of the Gilbert and Sullivan season, proves our faithfulness to anything which has become an institution—" even though it is good." The dead no longer bury the dead, but bury the living; doubtless in 2022 they will be reviving *Heartbreak House* to cover their failure to appreciate some contemporary dramatist.

These notes are written on the eve of departure for Holland, where an International Theatre Exhibition is being held under the auspices of the Dutch Association Art for the People. The editors of THEATRE-CRAFT have had the honour of organising the English Section of the Exhibition, and would take this opportunity of thanking the artists who, by lending their work, have rendered the section so truly representative of serious English Theatre art. The necessity of collecting and dispatching the work in a period of about ten days prevented our approaching some artists whose work we should have liked to see included, but among those who have sent may be mentioned Edmund Dulac, C. Lovat Fraser, Th. Komisarjevsky, Norman Macdermott, Paul Nash, Chas. Ricketts, George Sheringham, Norman Wilkinson, and Alfred Wolmark, while the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the Unnamed Group at Manchester have also contributed. The Exhibition is being opened on January 21st by Gordon Craig, and one room is devoted to his work and that of Appia. It is our intention to devote the March number of THEATRE-CRAFT to this Exhibition.

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The New Spirit in the German Drama

By Norman Thomas

It is a great pleasure to turn from the many highly controversial aspects of post-war Germany and dwell upon one expression of the national genius which, without by any means excluding conflicts of æsthetic judgment, cannot but be viewed by us with sympathetic interest, often with admiration and delight—I mean the Drama, particularly its newer developments.

Dr. Diebold is a critic who combines profundity with an animated style and a pretty wit. He has written a wise and stimulating book,* which not only guides us through the maze of dramatic production in Germany since about 1910, but also passes judgment upon it with authority and sound taste from a critical watch-tower which " looks on tempests and is never shaken "--based upon an enlightened spirituality and a real love of civilisation. This stability of standard is in itself a refreshing phenomenon amid so much merely journalistic criticism.

Little has yet been done to introduce to the English public the work of the younger men of letters in Germany since 1914, so that a short summary may be of interest.

The new generation of dramatists are in full reaction against the fatal effects of the war, which counts its spiritual dead and wounded in even greater numbers than its physical victims. They are resolved to throw off the shackles of the body. They see the present, often with the keenest insight, but in their eyes it is transformed into the future. Their goal is infinitely distant. They seek God in the ends of the earth, and in their own hearts. Their seeking has not yet crystallised into new forms—their work is

* *Anarchie im Drama*, by Dr. Bernhard Diebold. (Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 1921.)

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Setting for Wedekind's Herakles, Act V,
by Emil Pirchan.
(Prinzregententheater, Munich.)

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Design for Walter Hasenclever's Jenseits, Act II, Scene 4, by Adolph Linnebach. (Dresden State Theatre.)

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Setting for Fritz von Unruh's Ein Geschlecht,
by Prof. Alfred Roller.
(Burgtheater, Vienna.)

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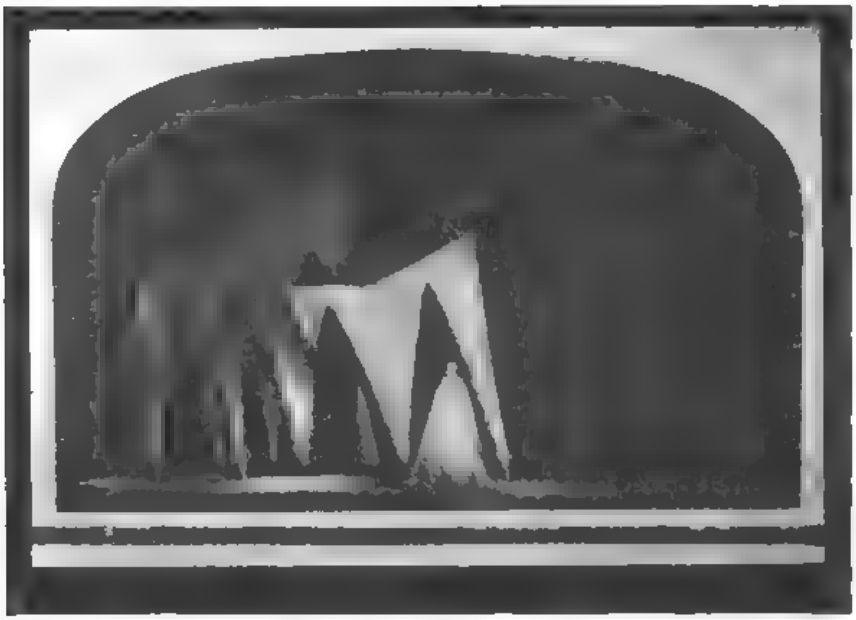

Expressionistic Setting for the Letter Scene in Macbeth, by Robert E. Jones.

An experiment in Expressionism, Jones' scenery conveyed the psychological and emotional development of the play by means of series of distorted arches and by the use of three great masks high in the air. An exhibition of his work is being held in London at The Dorien Leigh Gallery during March.

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experimental, shapeless, but it is informed with passionate longing for a new way of life. As Dr. Diebold puts it in a typically German way: " They celebrate in chaos the mystic union of Without and Within."

The word of power among the younger men is Expressionism—a term whose primary signification will appear later in this short study, but which is sufficiently vague in its connotations to embrace many different styles and viewpoints, and may be used conveniently, and not altogether incongruously, in referring to all the writers to whom the foregoing introductory remarks apply: the cool Platonist Georg Kaiser, the ecstatic Paul Kornfeld, the film-artist Walter Hasenclever, the rugged word-sculptor Fritz von Unruh, the cynical pagan Carl Sternheim, and the pious Catholic Reinhard Sorge—for these six are probably the most representative figures.

Expressionism is at once a fashion and a philosophy. As a fashion it flourishes an anarchic vehemence of language, symbol and gesture, which is largely a reaction against inherited forms, and is transitory. As a philosophy it demands closer and more respectful treatment, though here again it is, broadly, but a natural rebellion against effete formulæ, a longing for deeper, more abundant life, and hence but a new link in the chain of similar movements in European literature.

First of all, this new spirit disclaims the pursuit of Art for Art's sake. It has a mission; it raises the standard of the Crusade against Materialism. Its prophets—of varying worth and motive to be sure—join in a cry of longing which they hope to hear echoed in the hearts of millions of the mute and inglorious: " Life! Despite hunger and spiritual death—Life, with a new mind and a new spirit! " " The work of the younger generation," says Dr. Diebold, " reaffirms the sway and potency of the classical νοῦς and ψυχή, the one all-extensive to the very confines of the universe, judging and formulating, rising to the triumph of ethical free-will; the other all-intensive to the very heart of our heart's mystery, feeling, hearing, and seeing, rising to the triumph of loving surrender to the All-Will . . ." Yet they have still to learn that Mind and Spirit are indissolubly united in the ideal art-form. They have eschewed Naturalism which lacked both, but

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some are for Mind alone, pure form, mathematical symmetry (the Cubism, for example, of Georg Kaiser's *Gas* series, with its nameless " men in black " and " men in yellow " and its telegram style of speech); while others are all lyric moan, self-abnegation, other-worldliness (for instance, Kornfeld's *Verführung*).

Thus the Expressionist drama still hovers uncertainly between Tragedy and a sort of Pious Comedy, in which the tragic crisis is circumvented by resignation. The term cannot be confined to one kind of literary or dramatic style or to one type of theatre-technique, but its various manifestations can all be recognised and classed as the direct attempts at self-description and realisation of an overflowing soul, which moulds and transmutes nature, circumstance, and other men and women into phantom symbols of its own desires, impulses, and aspirations.

The " old masters " of the Expressionists are Strindberg—the Strindberg of the later, post-*Damascus* period —and Frank Wedekind, the much misunderstood. These sought and pursued the human soul, the one in its superconscious states of ecstasy, dream-frenzy, religious longing; the other in the subconscious regions of instinct, unreason, animalism. The later Strindberg was a suffering, self-torturing penitent; Wedekind suffering and self-torturing too, but a rebel to the last, a passionate denunciator and preacher behind the mask and motley of a clown.

Strindberg's direct influence is seen in the soliloquising, moralising hero of some modern plays, whose Ego is refracted psycho-biographically into a multiplicity of subsidiary characters, whose lonely, over-intellectualised soul cries out for love, to the accompaniment of appropriate musical or lighting effects. Wedekind's contribution is the release of the erotic nature as a reaction against the anti-vital claims of the over-sophisticated brain; hence a campaign against cant and perverted traditions in education. Their influence has been profound, though not always beneficent or fruitful, especially in respect of stage technique and the excessive use of mechanical contrivances to cover weaknesses in construction or dialogue. But their destructive exposure of pre-war society paved the way for more positive creative work, of which the present transition

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stage of rather chaotic experiment may perhaps be the direct precursor.

The first play which may properly be classed as Expressionist is *Der Bettler*, by the late Reinhard Sorge, written in 1910, when the life-work of Strindberg and Wedekind was drawing to an end. The author calls it not a drama, but a " dramatic message." The hero is no hero in the accepted sense, but " the Beggar " asking the alms of love from men for men. Sorge brings himself, in the character of the " Poet," before the curtain to announce that he and the chief personage, " the Son," are identical —the same kind of autobiographical confession as in Wedekind's *König Nikolo*, the egomania of Strindberg. Prose and verse alternate in the dialogue, and lyric rhapsodies transform the action at times into a kind of religious ceremony. In idealism the play is rich, but it evades the conditions of drama.

Paul Kornfeld's *Die Verführung* followed in 1913, a torrential lava of lyric suffering in a framework of scanty, none too convincing action. A much maturer work, still chaotic but finely poetic, is his *Himmel und Hölle*, which appeared in 1919.

Carl Sternheim, one of the most talented playwrights of the five years preceding the war, constituted himself the grimly satiric, objective historian of the materialistic bourgeois mentality which prepared and hastened the moral *débâcle* of 1914. The series of *Die Hose*, *Der Snob*, and *1913*, with *Bürger Schippel*, strips the Germany of the Wilhelm II. era bare of its pretences, challenges and ridicules its standards, and almost prophesies its inevitable downfall.

Georg Kaiser, whose name does not seem to have come into prominence until after 1914, is difficult if not impossible to classify. His versatility in theme, in technique, and in tone is remarkable, and one feels that only a certain desire to *épater* prevents him from achieving real greatness. Is he a notoriety-monger, an irresponsible Puck, or a would-be reformer whose delicate sensibility demands the mask of cynicism? The one thing certain is that he is an extraordinarily gifted artist in stagecraft and in dramatic construction, from whom a masterpiece may yet be forthcoming. His pre-war plays already showed him many-

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sided. *Rektor Kleist* was a pathological study of education, obviously owing much to Wedekind. *Die jüdische Witwe* was an impudent ironic reinterpretation of the Judith-Holofernes story, brilliant but unequal. Still less pleasant in its psychopathology, but more finished, was the tragi-comedy of Marke, Tristan and Isolde, *König Hahnrei*. The Expressionist *Von Morgens bis Mitternachts*, the only play of Kaiser's that has been performed in this country, is not a good example of his work, but foreshadows his later vein of sociological criticism. Since 1914 Kaiser has produced in quick succession a dozen plays of varying merit, erotic farce, pseudo-romantic drama, neo-classicist satire, psychological history, social criticism, philosophic dialogue, and prophecy in symbolism. His future development cannot be conjectured, but his last published play, *Gas* (second part), shows a mastery of stage effect and an underlying earnestness of purpose which augur well.

Of the youngest generation, the most promising are undoubtedly Walter Hasenclever and Fritz von Unruh, strong contrasts in most respects, but both idealists in passionate rebellion against the Germany of the immediate past, and heralds of a new dawn. Hasenclever's danger is preciosity through over-careful selection, while Unruh's is formlessness through superabundance of matter.

Hasenclever's *Der Sohn*, completed in 1914 when the author was only 23, was the first Expressionist drama to be staged (in 1916) and, by the echoes it aroused in the hearts of the better elements in Young Germany rather perhaps than from its literary qualities, brought him an early celebrity. It is typical of the new movement in its grouping of the subsidiary characters as psychological shadows cast by the central figure, and this was emphasised in the Mannheim production by appropriate stage pictures and lighting. The play is a twentieth-century *Sturm und Drang* ebullition, strongly individualist, symbolising the revolt of the spirit against the shackles of reality, powerful and engrossing in spite of youthful defects.

"My heart shall use its new-won liberty
To show mankind the source of truest strength"

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is the final note, which sums up the attitude of this band of young artists and their not inconsiderable following.

Hasenclever's later works include *Der Retter*, an anti-militarist manifesto in a rather weak and nebulous dramatic setting (this was banned during the war); *Die Menschen*, an ultra-Expressionist, even cinematographic series of pictures in which the symbolism is not always clear, and the dialogue, in a somewhat too *recherché* style of extreme brevity, does not add to the clarity; and *Jenseits*, a psychological drama of great strength and originality, which shows that Hasenclever is maturing and developing along new and fruitful lines.

Fritz von Unruh stands apart as a unique phenomenon in modern Germany. A Prussian Junker of old family in whom is embodied the most fervent anti-Prussianism imaginable; an officer of the old school, the descendant of generals, who hates the old school with the vigour of the pioneer of a new spirit; a professional militarist than whom none has denounced more feelingly the base and senseless cruelty of militarism; a changeling, above all a born poet of the Schiller type capable of clothing the noblest idealism in weighty and resonant verse. His first plays—*Offiziere* (1910) and *Louis Ferdinand, Prinz von Preussen* (1913)—are studies in duty, the duty of the soldier and the ruler. They remain within fairly conventional limits, but show a preoccupation with the broader problems of the human will which was destined to be swept into new channels by the Great War and lead to a final repudiation of the doctrine of force and a new message to the defeated German people. This message, first outlined in the dramatic poem, *Vor der Entscheidung* (autumn, 1914), is contained in a trilogy of which only the first two parts have yet appeared—*Ein Geschlecht* (1916, produced June 1918) and *Platz* (1918-9, produced June 1920), while the third, to be called either *Dietrich* or *Taumel*, is eagerly awaited. These two plays are, of all contemporary drama, the most convincing claimants to the title of works of genius. No other poet has used the raw material offered by the war in its cosmic aspect to such monumental, illuminating purpose.

Ein Geschlecht presents the problem of war and its attendant evils in broad and massive symbolism, a sombre

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and intense prologue which sweeps along with growing momentum to a climax which leads directly into the second scene, *Platz*. The hero Dietrich is borne on the shoulders of the war-weary soldiers down from the graveyard on the hill outside which the previous action has taken place into the town below, to confront and depose the representatives of the old order and put an end to the butchery. The deed and the duty are as clear, as unquestioned, as apparently simple as Hamlet's, but Dietrich, too, is checked and baffled by an inner complex. Can a mere contradiction of the old spirit, dreadfully symbolised in the " Platz," the old square with its Government buildings and its statues, which is the scene of the conflict—can force superseding force lay any lasting foundations for a new order? Dietrich is troubled, loses his mastery of events, and the broken power of the old *régime* falls into the hands, not of his followers, who are lost without a leader, but of Christlieb Schleich, one of the greatest creations of modern literature—an epitome of the sinister, conscienceless forces of modern life, in whom all generous impulses become a caricature, all ideals a matter of business, all great ideas their vulgarised equivalents, love, lust and loyalty, calculation. The present generation is not equal to its destiny. Schleich triumphs, and we are left with only hope and the prophecy of a new race, springing from such as have overcome in themselves the insidious power of the " Platz " and found a new love and a new harmony.

It will be clear from this short sketch that much valuable work is being done. It would be well for us in this country if means were found to familiarise us, by translation as soon as possible after the publication of the originals, with the best work in poetry, fiction, and the drama, not only in Germany, but in all European countries.

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The Theatre Unbound

By Alexander Bakshy

(Author of " The Path of the Modern Russian Stage ")

THE more one observes the modern theatre, the more one thinks of it, the stronger grows one's conviction that our playgoers live in a fool's paradise. The Titan who gave mankind the divine fire of histrionic art has—now for over a century—been kept in chains, mocked at, and tortured. It is almost impossible to recognise his image under the countless shackles and the hideous trappings that have been heaped on him by ignorance, sensationalism, and greed. In fact, few people among our generation can even picture to themselves this forgotten image. To visualise it one must go mentally through the process of unbinding the theatre, of breaking down all the fetters that keep it powerless and tame.

Before setting out on this task, however, let us first make sure what the chains actually are. And here it is important to note that in spite of their varied shapes and colourings they are made of the same material. We have all long since recognised such chains in the illusionism of naturalistic pictures. We condemned them as an outrage against art. But where did we seek salvation? In the symbolical, imaginative, conventional, or some other " creative " representation of life. We delighted in the " artistic " pictures which the lavish imagination of playwrights, painters, and musicians produced for us on the stage. And all the time we remained blind to the fact that a picture of some world, no matter how unreal, which we are induced to accept as existing outside and independently of the theatre, is but a piece of illusionistic trickery which is made possible only by the suppression of everything that distinguishes the theatre as a theatre.

This is, briefly, how illusionism (which is another name for representation) performs its trick of suppression. It

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takes the play, which is a performance, exhibition, " show " of life, and transforms it into a " slice of life "—real or imaginary. It takes the actors, *i.e.*, performers, exhibitors, " showmen," and turns them into the inhabitants of the pictured world. It disguises the stage, which is a part of the theatre (fortunately it does so only with a partial success), as a realm which is supposed to be entirely unrelated to the stage-boards. And, finally, it tacitly ignores the spectator who is the cause of all the activity on the stage, as if the " show " had nothing to do with him.

In the *abstract*, illusion might be a perfectly legitimate object of art. Its only flaw is that it cannot be divorced from the means which are employed to produce it. Since the means are *concrete*: they have their own nature, their peculiar qualities, whose appeal to our senses is the foundation of all art. Hence the contradiction: *to produce illusion you must blunt the senses; to produce art you must stimulate them.*

The theatre whose object is art must therefore be freed from illusionism. It must shake off its slumber, forget its dreamy wanderings in the far-off realms of the playwrights' imagination, and come back to its own world—its Performance, its Showmen, its Stage-boards, and its Spectators. Through their hundred and fifty years of inactivity these have become stiff, anæmic, almost lifeless. Only continuous and vigorous exercise will quicken the circulation of their blood and will make them again strong, robust, and healthy.

How lively and invigorating this unbound and awakened theatre will be!

" Performance," now so unrecognisable in its ponderous representational garb, will appear in its divine nakedness. No longer will it be a picture of events as these are shaped in some real or imaginary world. It will itself be an event, but an event in the life of the theatre, a happening in that real world which is a gathering of actors and spectators come together, the first to practise, and the second to watch, the art of undisguised and glorying make-believe. Love and hatred, character and psychology of action, will be stage love and stage hatred, stage character and stage psychology of action, though not of that nauseating variety which has been stereotyped by

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talentless actors. The staginess of the play will mean an exhibition of life in terms of the theatre, *i.e.*, neither the dramatic action without the spectacle, nor the spectacle without the dramatic action, but the two merged in the *dramatic show*. Nor will the playwright, in showing or presenting his drama, be bound by considerations of realistic, psychological, or some supernatural truth. His aim will be dramatic truth, and in bodying it forth on the stage he will be free to treat his material—the elements of human character and action—in any fashion he will choose so long as his convention is made intelligible, is theatrical in its nature, and lays no claim to be anything but a method of presentation.

In the performance so restored to its true function the actor will also recover the purity and freedom he once possessed. He will act his part, serve it up to the audience, not impersonate characters or incarnate supernatural beings. When the curtain rises we shall discover not some strange Martians who by a mysterious process have been transplanted on to the stage, but actors, showmen, displaying all that is worth seeing in the characters and actions they present, just as the salesman displays the various qualities of his wares.

And what about the stage? Will it remain mutilated and distorted by painted or built-up scenery purporting to give pictures of everything that human imagination can conceive of, save one thing—the stage itself? No, out of its present degradation it will be restored to the dignity it possessed in the ancient days. It will be a stage and nothing but a stage, a part of the theatre building serving as a pedestal on which the plastic structure of the dramatic show is raised by the actors. And in doing this it will be playing a distinct and tremendously important part in the general scheme of the dramatic spectacle. Made vocal, proclaiming its identity in every phase of the action as it is being developed, it will become a live and potent thing. The yoke of its proscenium arch destroyed, the unsightly tatters which it has been forced to wear cast mercilessly away, and itself given the shape worthy of its part, the stage will once again appear resplendent in its natural beauty.

And with this, the purging of the play, the actor and

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the stage, there will also come the emancipation of the audience. Poor playgoers of our day! Except in the music-halls, what consideration do they get in the modern theatre? They are there only on sufferance, having bribed the manager for the privilege of watching the show. The author, the actor, and the painter all join in a conspiracy of silence, treating them as outsiders who are not entitled even to the usual courtesy of "How d'you do?" It is true at times the more conscientious among the theatrical fraternity begin to feel a kind of embarrassment. They benevolently smile at the playgoers and, patting them familiarly on the back, address them thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, the outlines of our picture are somewhat vague. But art is suggestion, and if you lend us your imagination we will build our beautiful vision together." Into which artfully laid trap the unsuspecting playgoer falls head over heels, forgetting in his gratitude that together with his imagination he lends his critical faculties as a spectator. But men of the stage can be even more considerate. They pull a long face and solemnly declaim: "Brethren, in this temple there will be revealed to you the mystery of life. Open your hearts to receive the truth. Pray and worship. Thus will you be saved." And, mistaking the theatre for the church, the obedient playgoer prays and worships, and is indeed saved—the effort of asserting himself as a spectator, *i.e.*, a person who comes to the theatre, not to forget himself in a contact with the supernatural power (there are plenty of other places where he can do so), but to experience an æsthetic reality through an impact with the creative power of the stage. In short, whether ignored, patronised, or narcotised, the modern playgoer is really cheated out of his rights, which are:—That the author should acknowledge him, that the actor should be courteous to him, that the stage-designer should not forget him, and that he himself should be neither coaxed nor bludgeoned into a surrender of his position as a critical spectator. This recognition he will obtain only in the Unbound Theatre—not a temple or a conjuring shop, but just a theatre—a place where one can watch a pure, vigorous, and vital *dramatic show*.

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THE
ENGLISH REVIEW

Maynard Keynes on Revision

By + I.

In *A Revision of the Treaty* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) Mr. Maynard Keynes returns to the problem of the world, once more with masterly lucidity and grasp of the whole economic position. The book is, as he says, an " appendix "; it is a timely one. Eschewing the exigencies of political prudence, he declares outright that the Treaty must be revised on the basis of eliminating the enormous reparation demand for " pensions," which, as he explains unanswerably, was a contrivance sandwiched into the agreed written document of the Treaty at the eleventh hour by M. Klotz for the purpose, as he subsequently boasted, of leaving the extent of the reparation demands an open question. There is also the mysterious intervention of General Smuts on this point, which remains obscure. In any case the pensions demand, constituting two-thirds of the indemnity claim, is not in accordance with the letter or spirit of President Wilson's Armistice condition as agreed upon by the Allies and the enemy, and there can be no doubt that in substituting this huge demand after the Armistice had been concluded the Allies were guilty of a breach of faith both militarily and politically. But to-day we know it is an unfulfillable demand. Let that unfair claim, says Maynard Keynes, go overboard.

So much for the political side of the question. The rest of the book deals scientifically with the possibility of realising such claims, and with suggestions as to the only means capable of restoring economic equilibrium in Europe and in Great Britain.

People are still wonderfully ignorant of economics, chiefly because, as the author in a caustic passage points out, the written word is so little in accordance with the private spoken word that in the main the public always

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hear the propagandist side of a question and but rarely the true one; thus it has come about that one still hears men and women talking about reparations in terms of £1,000,000,000, as in the days of war when credit meant merely a book entry. None the less, privately people do now dimly understand, and the myth of the last election is widely known to-day to be an economic absurdity, all the more as traders and merchants are feeling acutely the effects of smashing Europe, or their best customers, to satisfy a plutocratic vanity. Let all who still believe in mountains of gold turn to Mr. Keynes's latest book. They will find there stark cold facts. They will be up against realities. They will see what underlies the gingerbread of political unveracities. They will know what all men who think have long been saying among themselves—in private.

Mr. Keynes is constructive, and after showing that the London Agreement of £6,500,000,000 is an impossible figure, he advocates revision on the basis of a total payment by Germany of £63,000,000 annually for thirty years. This figure eliminates the pensions demands, totalling just under £2,000,000,000 in all.

Such a sum would to-day satisfy Englishmen, with the exception of those politicians and newspapers who either do not want to or cannot think: the question is France, and here Mr. Keynes is judicial and realistic. He points out that if France refuses world accommodation and peace for preferential isolation, she could not expect the Allies to forgo their tribute of debt, with the consequences that the major part of what France should receive from Germany she would have to pay back to us and America, in fact actually realising less than she would on the actual or realisable sum advocated in his reduced scheme, which involves Britain's remission of debts and renunciation of German reparation other than a sum to be allocated to the relief of Austrian and Polish finance.

So much for the economic truth of reparation. The London Agreement total is a myth. Mr. Keynes also proves the outrageous exaggeration of the French demands for damage, each cottage, assessed at £240, figuring at £2,000, and so on, until the total demand averages about three times any fair estimable figure. This is an important

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point, and the same applies to the Belgian demand. The entire claim was treated at Paris as a superb joke, as if money was pulled out of a bottomless pit and all that the Allies had to do was to exact as much as they dared. Probably £1,000,000,000 would fully cover France's material damage. The truth is that politicians aimed at crippling Germany for good; they did not think as economists; the object was penal, and that is how the pensions claim, repudiated by all American lawyers at the time, crept into the bill. At the Election here in 1918 the sum given was £23,000,000,000. It dwindled to £11,000,000,000; at London it was reduced to £6,500,000,000, yet so far the Germans have not been able to pay for the armies of occupation. In the delirium of greed, politicians forgot the exchange, with the result that Germany has to sell out her currency to pay anything. Hence the chaos. Hence our decline, our unemployment, our anxiety—we cannot sell; the peace is war.

Now if France, thirsting for revenge, like Shylock, demands her full pound of flesh, we and America must ask for ours; this, however, implies continuous chaos. But if we step in and lead, renounce our claims, write off the Allied debts, France would and could receive in payment every year a sum equal to half the total amount of gold now held in France, and in thirty years receive ten times the amount paid by her to Germany after 1871. That is practical politics, the other is fairy finance. Every banker in Britain knows it. Every merchant of standing knows it. The country at large, weary and suspicious, at least understands the pinch of poverty consequent on reparation demands which cannot be applied, which cripple trade, which promote unemployment, which threaten to destroy the foundations of Western civilisation.

Mr. Keynes has also pertinent remarks to make upon the " new " method of payment in commodities, which he regards as illusory on any large or continuous scale. He shows the disaffection that would be caused in home industries, and the economic fallacy of imagining that complementary and supplementary goods would benefit trade without reacting competitively in both incidence and balance, and his words on this point are illuminating, as he illustrates over America. If we, for instance, pay back our debt to America

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in goods, American exports—American farmers in particular—will sadly suffer. The reparation question to us has its exact equivalent in our debt to America, which surely will never be paid—it cannot be paid, and to allege that it can is pretence. When it comes to the point, America in her own economic interests will not want it paid, precisely as we, in regard to German purchasing-power, cannot allow an impoverished Europe which must impoverish us. The only real difficulty lies in getting people and politicians to understand sufficient about elementary economics to take constructive steps before it is too late; but the economic consequences of the peace are visited upon us to-day with cumulative pressure, and most certainly it cannot be long now before Britain falls into line with Mr. Keynes's pronouncements and the perils of ignoring them. Britain is in real danger to-day. If she fails to tackle the problem of Europe at this eleventh hour, the point of recovery will have passed and with it the prospects of prosperity in these islands.

There is one aspect which may be referred to—money, about which Mr. Keynes still writes as an orthodox economist of the gold standard school. This is not the place to inquire into that part of the problem, vital as it is, nor has the time quite arrived. The world's problem, from the point of view of finance, which to-day controls governments and policies, is money, the world's financial system; and the issue is the maintenance or not of that system. Mr. Keynes thinks as a doctrinaire of the system. Actually the question is real credit or financial credit, which resolves itself into the struggle between finance and the producer. Can, in other words, financial credit survive the existing impasse? Or, to put it bluntly, does money and its mechanism matter more than production and the real values of production? Such is really the problem of Europe, exemplified in Russia, Germany, and all the nations with mad exchanges, as against those nations, pre-eminently ourselves, who are ignoring production and absorption for financial value, or the exchange. Can Europe ever recover financially; ever pay its debts or tributes? And it is unquestionably the realisation of the negative answers to these questions which dictate Mr. Keynes's advocacy of wholesale debt and tribute cancellation—in the interest of

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the world's monetary system. Unquestionably he is right on this line. Is it the whole line? Are we not in reality coming, through over-production *versus* depreciating purchasing-power, through the clash of profits and wages, prices and credit, through the proved instability of a gold system which is no longer a cover for or relevant to credit, to a deadlock which must in the course of things precipitate a collapse, and so to the inauguration of a new, a scientific, monetary standard of value? Mr. Keynes does not touch upon the crucial problem. It may be studied from the phenomenon of the existing slump as against the booming prosperity of the Banks paying an average of 16 per cent. dividend with profits varying from £500,000 to £2,500,000, frantically engaged in building bank premises all over England—the only people who can build to-day. As things are, the manipulators of money, the Banks, wax fantastically rich, while the producers pay taxes on bank overdrafts and mortgages, like the poor farmers. Is this a healthy condition? Can it last? On this point we should like to have Mr. Keynes's considered opinion. We leave all this for the moment. We can only say that if there is the faintest chance of maintaining the pre-war financial system, Mr. Keynes in this volume shows us the only way out; proves incontestably, to all who want to know as distinct from believing what they want, the truth about the whole reparation myth which ever since the Armistice has spread agony over Europe, to the sport of political argument, and actually threatens to pauperise this country for an electioneering lie. Mr. Keynes is easily the first economic writer in England both in manner and matter. If politicians treat the grave words in this tome with the careless ignorance with which they treated his first book, we shall find the year 1922 a progressively black one, and there will be no trade recovery and the financial *débâcle* will become imminent.

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To Genoa!

By Austin Harrison

It is always the little things, *les petits soins*, as the French say, that matter, and so the turgid Premiership of M. Briand ended ingloriously over a game of golf. The photograph is a dangerous record. Nothing kills like laughter, and when Parisians viewed the antics of their Premier in the newspapers, struggling to swing a club under the tuition of the " dangerous " Mr. Lloyd George, their pride was touched; their *panache* (Frenchmen invariably carry about a *panache*) was pricked; the Treaty, the Rhine, the gold, the revenge, all this was instinctively felt to be in the melting-pot in any further attempts of M. Briand to " keep his eye on the ball," for not so assuredly would Napoleon have met the wiles of a British Prime Minister. At Cannes M. Briand's tenure of office terminated, and he returned to abdicate. Thus yet another French Premier goes, knifed as Clemenceau, who knifed President Wilson, was himself knifed, to be followed by M. Millerand, M. Leygues, and now M. Poincaré, whose reign is hardly likely to exceed a few months. The internal side of the overthrow of M. Briand is not our affair; it had been slowly maturing; on the whole, M. Briand was lucky to enjoy so long a run, but the external aspects of the change may be of historical significance to England and to all Europe.

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The change means the return of political France to the spirit of the Versailles Treaty, and though M. Poincaré in office will certainly not be the fire-breather of M. Poincaré with the pen, he undoubtedly stands for the Treaty integral, for French military hegemony, for military " security," and if he swerves from this programme he, too, will fall. His policy is what is falsely termed " security," which means the Rhine; reparations, which mean the strangulation of Central Europe; an alliance with Britain, which would imply in this country conscription and implicit readi-

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ness to fight for the Balkanised Europe of the Versailles Treaty at the behests of France. That is why I think M. Poincaré can hardly continue in office more than four months. For we simply dare not return to conscription and a blind military alliance. We simply cannot afford to pay for another decade of bloated armaments. We really cannot continue to ruin England industrially for the " immortality of the dead," as a Frenchman poetically put it to me, to whom I replied that the " dead bury their dead." M. Poincaré represents the completion of the post-Armistice circle. We return for the time to the Treaty of Versailles. In culture and gesture he is the embodiment of feudal France, seeking to maintain an old glory. But he is no thinker. His policy rests upon a quicksand. His dream is but a dream. He is the penultimate crisis of the recurrent crises that have marked Europe's descent since the failure of President Wilson.

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In this now terrible sense, he is to-day only a politician; and because of this attitude, his incapacity to learn, this fine old martial *crânerie* M. Poincaré will find realities too strong for diplomatics, the spirit of the age too young, too free and ardent to go back to the simple theorem of militarism; also his and the world's debts are too cataclysmic. Consequently there is no cause for alarm. Personally, I welcome the advent of M. Poincaré, for at least he represents Chauvinist France and we shall know where we are. He will not play golf with Mr. Lloyd George. He will not favour the perambulating methods of Governments seeking to undo the evils and sillinesses of Versailles. He will be the frank, honest militarist demanding the spoils of victory —gold, territory, and revenge. He will insist upon a French peace which means one half of Europe armed and primed to exploit and keep under the other half, and if we sign to his bond we shall write " paid " across the history of this Empire. We cannot sign on, and because we cannot we have come to the penultimate crisis before the awakening, and no doubt the next two or three months will be " hectic " on both sides of the Channel. But if we hold on to our course, go to Genoa and pursue a policy of the single reconstruction of Europe, France will have to

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follow in her own despite, because her finances cannot face the disabilities of isolation. If it is diplomacy that M. Poincaré hopes to play, the old secret diplomatic kind, he is doomed to disappointment. Politics are to-day finance, not frontiers, or dreams, or revenge, or cockades. Reparations are a world liability rather than a German possibility. The whole need is peace. The nation which aspires to rebuild on war imagines a vain thing. The statesman who ignores the fierce truths of the world's economic and financial problems is just a toy man playing in a nursery, and if he breaks too many windows the world's doctor will be sent for to prescribe.

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That doctor is America, and her apothecary is Europe's gold. It is all there, in the Federal Bank's vaults, leaving old Europe with a vacuum of paper. Now French imperialism is finance, and so the American apothecary is also France's " specialist." At Washington M. Briand made the curious mistake of thinking that America could be won over by rhetoric in French, which very few Americans by the way understand, to sidetrack Britain, no doubt partly because of some compact, secret or otherwise, made with Japan, and partly because of the inability of French politicians to realise that English, not French, is the future world diplomatic language. That is where Ireland comes in. Ireland is a world key, an absolute pivotal position. We removed the encumbrance, thus automatically taking the place at Washington aspired to by France, who, piqued at the rebuff, riposted with a huge demand for submarines, to the consternation of the very 100 per cent Americans prepared to go quite a long way in memory of Lafayette. Those who think of Ireland as merely Ireland and consequently bemoan what they describe as our " weakness " to let loose the cocker of the Black and Tans may console themselves with the demonstration of success registered at Washington as between Britain and the United States. War between America and Japan has at least been deferred for some years. We and America have come to a co-operative basis, and motive, of world policy which seems destined to salve and regenerate Europe.

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That is a splendid achievement. It was not Mr. Balfour who did this work, it was the settlement of Ireland, for in that act we regained the spirit and soul of our civilisation. Into the opposing scales France cast submarines, as might some knight in armour rising from the tomb throw his gauntlet before a machine-gun. The effects were electrical. In a flash Americans understood something about Europe, grasped what so long had baffled them. The apothecary in the background grinned. And so at Washington two important things happened. First and foremost, America clasped the hand of England. Secondly, Americans now know what it is that obstructs peace in Europe; why it is that peace can never reign in feudal conditions.

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And now, on the top of the submarines, enter M. Poincaré, with the vanes of France pointing to the Rhine. We are on our world points again. The subterfuges, cajoleries, asides, whispers, cantomimes, and harlequinades of the Briand-Lloyd George period are brushed aside; the "empty" drum of Tolstoi's story takes the place of the travelling circus; we have got to face up to the music of Versailles which we, like poor simpletons, played fiddle to. Its symphony is to-day a howling discord. The chorus has influenza. Only the drums beat a consonant tattoo, and very pressingly the question arises: What are we going to do about it? Our difficulties are internal and concern chiefly government structure. As the Coalition approaches its inevitable end the forces of Conservatism scent danger. There is a slight revolt. Conservatism uses France to stampede the trend of home politics, hoping to force the Premier into an alliance with France for the purpose of consolidating militarism here from fear of Labour. These men also are not thinking. Their apothecary is also America. We, too, have stupendous debts. If we desire to save our financial mechanism we must first be financiers, not militarists. Still, they have won the opening round. There will not be a surprise election. Certain forces here, heavily disgruntled at the to them unexpected settlement with Ireland, may be expected to turn their batteries on to promoting a military alliance with France, but their

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activities will be wasted on the desert air of unemployment and wholesale trade stagnation, which is a condition of infinitely greater danger to England than any likely to accrue from physical Europe for at least a decade, or to France. These whoops and squeaks are merely the incidentals of politics and deceive nobody. At Washington we started a new era. We cannot, we dare not, go back, and in Ireland we have sealed our credentials. These are world commitments, above any battle-cry, above all spleen or racket of party or personal recrimination. In that crucible we transfuse a whole world, we set the real victory of example.

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If France then frustrates Genoa, blocks the road to recovery, even prefers isolation, she will but retard the inevitable course of events which, now that England and America have found a common equation, must worry on and through to real peace, and not least to a peaceful *Entente*. The position of France to-day is in reality entirely hopeful, for she can feed herself and find work for all, and she has no enemy to fear, except those that she chooses to make. An *Entente* is desirable and useful. The one indispensable condition is peace. If France wants us to cannonise the map of Europe as it is and undertake to fight for militarist Poland or any other of the military vassal States created as her strategic outposts, such a peace can only be illusory, and we shall return to the Europe of the pre-war period as it existed during the days of Napoleon. To secure this Europe we should have to enforce conscription, as the logical French know. An alliance based on disarmament would not serve France's purposes, because it could not terrify or subjugate the rest of Europe, and that is why a French deputy called out: "England has no Army." We have not—for such purposes. That is the difficulty. It can be overcome immediately by the smallest testimony of Liberal thought on the part of France. We who saw her through the great struggle are not likely to turn out "quitters" now that the goal has been won; but we can and must demand as our "security," not the Navy of France but the nationhood of France in pledge of both peace and policy. In plain

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words, we must know our liabilities, we must approve of them as a nation; then we two must work together for recovery, or the *Entente* will degenerate into a *détente*. The responsibility of France's new Premier is thus world-wide. To act as if France were now destined to play the part of janitor of Europe will be fatal to him and to the *Entente*. If he refuses to recognise Russia, that need not deter us in the slightest. If he intends to seize the Rhine, we cannot be abettors. If he persists in demanding impossible sums from Germany, we and America can at least teach a few elementary lessons in economics by asking for repayment of the sums due to us. The chances are that M. Poincaré will prove far less dramatic than his words out of office indicate, because France's financial plight is desperate and the French care very much indeed for good money. To-day her prosperity is entirely based on " soft " or paper money. The political exchanges might react painfully at any display of martial intoxication. The apothecary in America is the world's physician, the sole positive left by the war. And he, too, is in danger. Gold is in danger; it is, in fact, fighting for its life, and it is the kind of metal that men do fight for. M. Poincaré will have to frame up for or against the world's token. We at any rate cannot continue to wallow in the bog of slump indefinitely. France may be happy with 700,000 men in the Army dreaming of torrents of German gold; we are unhappy enough with two million unemployed freed of all gold illusion.

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These are the political ups and downs as the inevitable concomitants of the change gradually coming into the minds of men on the subject and necessity of war, as they are the consequences of an iniquitous peace. Really to advance, we shall have to begin over again, step by step to retrace our steps till we win to the full altitude of the new epoch in front of us. Clearly we cannot go on with war as our chief interest—it will be too costly, too disastrous, too agonising at the " back." It is for that reason that peace, if it is to be anything but the ordinary condition of preparation for war, must at least be settled with some

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attention to the needs and rights of all, or obviously in the whirligig of time the sword will justify the means. There is no hope of permanent peace in the Balkanised Europe of the Treaty, and forcibly to safeguard that map is to make war in the future just and inevitable. This little educational lesson is our problem with France, and that is why America now urges the plan of an integrated industrial Europe as the first condition of a United European States. Dream as it may seem, that is the key to the European Treaty of recovery outlined by Mr. Lloyd George at Cannes, and it will be the basis of the meeting at Genoa. As an idea, it is far nearer realisation than most people imagine; indeed, it is perhaps the only way out of the present slough. To prevent war, we all mutually guarantee one another: we integrate. The map will here be of determining consequence. To integrate, satisfaction must roughly be general. That is to say, no implacable national grievances must be left so that one nation feels it has been robbed by another, and so on. To-day Europe is a cockpit of grievances of deep historic plant, of irreconcilable blood issues. We cannot integrate on that bloody map. Yet we can begin, and at Genoa something in the nature of solid foundations may well be laid, as a start.

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It is idle for men to grumble at bad trade and high taxation while refusing a right diagnosis of the causes that have brought about the effects they deplore, yet it is the very people who shout loudest for economy who demand a military alliance. So long as we refuse to think for ourselves, decline to take the trouble to ascertain facts and causes, content with the clamour of the day, we need not expect any serious improvement, for the trouble is of our own doing. We shouted into power a Parliament of placemen, it is unfair to expect from them sudden intelligence or responsibility. They hold a ticket; they hold on to it. Our organisations of opinion and thought have broken down in war; as a people we have become the spirals of a spiral, the shareholders of the Trust. Independence in politics is the cardinal sin. There is no longer the tonic of friction, and so the plain man votes politics a confounded

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nuisance. But to-day politics are economics. To ignore the blather is to ignore the causes of the blather, and this is to ignore the springs of our very existence. That is, no doubt, why Ministers can still solemnly discuss reparations in conscious terms of nonsense without the newspapers flaying them alive and Parliaments shooing them out, and until we recover our balance dope and the machine will continue to rule and rot our genius. Yet some force is afoot, some new if indefinable consciousness, and its designation may be symbolised as youth. As the old institutions crumble new thoughts catch fire. They are catching fire. The nation is curiously silent. Is it thinking? Learning? Planning? Or what? Assuredly, some process of hardening is proceeding.

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And it is so in every country throughout Europe. The Great War was the final combustion of feudalism, of war as the argonaut of man. To-day we are worn out, weary, apathetic. There is small thanksgiving. The fruits are like sorb-apples, only the inequities of the post-war life smart and sting. Europe is an ulceration. Almost ludicrously we ask of one another the meaning of our decline, of our silent factories, of our poverty and dwindling purchasing-power, and we cry out for lower taxation. How can we rebate a penny if we are to " secure " the strategic map of Europe for France? How can our trade by any possibility recover if Europe is compelled to sell out her paper currencies to buy raw or pay debts and indemnities? How can there be peace without the conditions of peace? America, as the wise apothecary, sits tight on her gold. When Europe begins to integrate, no doubt America will prescribe to each and every patient in turn, but not before such time. She recognises that the disease is common to all and that the problem is one. France, who would like a Europe of triumph astride a Europe of victimisation, will find no relief from the New World and but little, if any, from the Old. Her Treaty was an offence to the age, to herself, to all Western civilisation. It is the world's difficulty. True, we signed it, but we have recanted, and so largely has Italy. Literally, it cannot stand, if only

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because in its economic provisions it is an absurdity. At Genoa new beginnings will be made, with or without France. All the above was written before M. Poincaré's speech to the Chamber, January 19th, but there is nothing to sub-edit. M. Poincaré even spoke of "upholding Britain's liberty," which was charming of him, otherwise the gist is the Treaty integral, and at Genoa "no existing Treaties are to be discussed." Really, this sort of frothy talk is undignified from the responsible lips of a French Premier. Does he suggest that at Genoa golf is to be the thing? But there we have the glove thrown down, and in the mud that glove will stick. That is why Governments at Genoa intend to seek a basis of reason before calling in the American physician.

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Reason will come, is coming. Our national prosperity is at stake, and those who cry for militarism and the map of revenge are like men who refuse life. We are at the portals of a new world. Already we have taken the right steps, across the body of Ireland, in unison now with America. The urge is forward. True, we must not expect too much. "If," wrote Burke on the French Revolution, "a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it, the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence than the mere designs of men." Fine words, which apply once more to-day. We are rarely conscious of the stream of change, yet he must be a queer fellow who cannot feel that much of our old way of thinking has gone and that new concepts are necessary. Before us the vista of "ample Presidentiads" opens. A philosophy of peace has become a practical policy. It is no longer a matter of "patience" with France, of ridiculous equivocations with the successors of M. Loucheur and M. Klotz, of side-stepping this Minister or hypnotising that one, the wide differences in the policy of peace between England and France will now have to be examined publicly and a definite

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course settled on. The task will be perfectly easy if we meet M. Poincaré with the same candidness that he doubtless will extend to us, and if he wants the *Entente* to be placed on real foundations, wants, in other words, the potentiality of the " contemptibles," all that is necessary will be reason and the true security of peace. Not the Treaty of Versailles. Not paper indemnities. Not annexations. At heart, France is right enough. Her noble peasantry are one of Europe's proudest testimonies. The culture and intellect of France will survive all political disturbance. The only real difficulty is to convince political France that the security for peace is not war and that war means her and our destruction. M. Poincaré's Premiership will probably be this educational course, and when he is " through " France may be ready for the revelation of new methods and applications. Meanwhile the only hope for trade and our unemployed is Genoa.

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The World's Joke

By Austin Harrison

A MAN said to me the other day: "Why don't you publish a funny page? Men like fun. Give it to them." I replied: "Good. I will write the world's joke, yet I doubt if any man will laugh at all." Here it is, real fun, the unknown quantity of money.

We all know about reparations—how many realise the facts? I will state them. Germany now has 200,000,000,000 marks in Treasury and mark notes, soon they will be 300,000,000,000. Now as Germany, in order to pay gold mark reparations, must sell out her currency, this figure, unless something definite and possible is settled shortly, will presently go to 1,000,000,000,000, in company with Dr. Lenin's roubles, Austrian kronen, and Polish paper.

Economists tell us that stabilisation will shortly take place, that is, when politicians agree not to disagree about certain fundamentals known to every bank clerk. Now let us assume that this miracle occurs at a date when the German paper issue totals 300,000,000,000 marks, and assume that Germany, as the gold pundits argue, stabilises at 500. You divide by 500; the result is £600,000,000, which means that Germany emerges from the war with all her internal debts wiped out and, financially speaking, robustiously solvent.

Now follow the result. What would France, staggering under a debt of £11,000,000,000, say to this jovial kind of a Germany free from debt, financially cock of the walk? And what would we, staggering under a debt of £8,000,000,000, say to such a phenomenon?

Of course we should all cry "Treason," and all Paris would prepare to march to Berlin. This is joke number one.

Number two is progressive depreciation or reparations as they are. Observe. The mark issue continues. The ramp runs on until the bottom falls out at such time when buyers are no longer forthcoming—sales implying buyers—which

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may be in another year round about an issue of 1,000,000,000,000. But if that happens, reparations cease from troubling of themselves, no one being a buyer. Gold mark payments then become a paper impossibility, and that negative but technical point could be upheld so long as in Germany marks could be exchanged, just as roubles still can purchase things in Russia.

Again we would cry "Treason." We are "sold" because Germany can no longer sell out. There are no reparations; all is paper, finance is ·001.

Now precisely the same law operates with regard to Russian, Austrian, Polish, and other paper nations' currencies. They can stabilise at any figure, wipe out all debts, emerge solvent and buoyant, while the gold nations, *i.e.*, we, France, Italy, and America, carry on our backs enormous debts which we can never pay off, all for the sake of a mechanism which is no longer related to gold.

Picture our faces when the wild exchanges nations divide their note issues by 1,000, 500, or 200, to issue clear, free, without a debt, we finding ourselves doomed to huge taxation to pay interest on the debts we can never pay off, thereby crippling our trade, our initiative, our entire life—to preserve the bankers' discounts. Would we do it? Joke number three. No. We also would divide by something. We have got to a new law in political economy, the *noumenal* or fourth dimension point, which is that credit means nothing. (This is not a joke, it is scientific.)

Now when a country divides by something or other a new currency will have to emerge (*vide* Dr. Lenin). Once more the printing press can work, and when the new currency reaches a fourth dimension point, you burn and divide again. Credit becomes a denominator, related to nothing more substantial than the bonfire. We have found Aladdin's cave. Credit is infinite, like space.

Formerly, kings depreciated the actual coin, but with paper one becomes psychical: it passes over to return in a brand new colour and value.

This is exactly what is happening. Speculators pay the German indemnity, *per contra* Germany produces and captures trade on the process of going bankrupt or preparing to divide by something or other in order to get a new currency, just as we, in the gold standard countries, in our

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poverty have our great-coats turned. Net result: Germany is free, we groan until we also do some dividing, or, waxing wrath, force Germany to pay up, when the printing-press process begins over again. That is all.

Carried thus to its logical conclusion, the gold countries would all imitate the paper-chase countries—bad money always driving out good money—until America, with 80 per cent. of all the gold, discovered that she, too, was slumped, gold being worth just about the price of the soya bean per ton on the market.

That is why those who do understand the complexities of the gold standard arithmetic are getting so seriously alarmed, and talk, like Professor Pigou, of a capital levy. They want at all costs, not to get reparations, which they know to be silly, but to preserve the gold standard by cancellation of debts, a capital levy, and a policy of paper devaluation which will increase trade and run up the values of all calls on gold to the great joy of banks and finance. This is joke number four.

The world's question will be: Will all Europe deliberately smash, that is, lose all her internal wealth or capital founded on goods in order to enable the gold mechanism countries to get away with their mechanism, which also means inconvertible paper, the gold part of it being a purely arbitrary argument? I doubt if this will turn out to be a joke.

As things are, all German banks hold their reserves in "stable" currencies, *i.e.*, English, Dutch, American, Swiss; so do merchants, with the result that German marks merely function in the cash or retail market and for use by speculators. That is why German exports fail to redeem the exchange—the money remains outside Germany. When Germany goes bankrupt or divides, it will be the bankruptcy of a shell.

It will be then that our difficulty will begin (joke number six). If Germany can wipe out or cash in her debt of £10,000,000,000 by merely dividing by 500, taxpayers in this country will certainly want to understand the need of glorifying our deadweight debt of £8,000,000,000 expressed in the income tax, which means no life for 75 per cent. of the population for evermore. They won't understand such three-dimensional finance and they, too, will

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demand paper or noumenal finance. And the joke is that the experts never write about all this fun, they seem to have no sense of humour. Stinnes was the first to see the joke. He said: "Money, it is a myth. Get on with the goods," which, by the way, is exactly what Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Lord Goschen would have said, and so credit, fourth-dimensional credit, is the world's problem—and joke.

One more test. If we stabilise the mark at 70, all Germany would smash because internal prices would fall so tremendously; again, if our exchange on America sunk to 1 dollar to the £, trade would revive by leaps and bounds. This is funny but true. Something is wrong. What? The exchange? No; the speculative or variable quality of our token is wrong, and so the exchanges are to-day political, and neither credit nor currencies have any scientific relation to their supposed cover, gold; our mechanism has got found out: production is bad (sic) finance.

The next step will probably be an attempt to force German *internal* prices up to the foreign exchange value, but this move can be regulated by Germany through the printing press. At Versailles only one thing mattered—the exchange; it was the one thing all men neglected. The consequence is seen to-day in growing financial chaos and in this paradox: that if trade revives here prices will rise, ergo wages will follow, ergo we shall be back on our labour troubles of 1921. And again, with better trade industrials will revive, money will not go into Treasury bills, the Government will find itself short. Our present slump is, of course, the usurers' harvest, which perhaps is joke number seven. In the gold countries production is actually at war with finance or the manipulators of the credit mechanism, in diametric opposition to all the principles, definitions, and "science" of political economy, and as trade recovers this paradox will prove all the gold Governments' root problem.

America, of course, could help, but she would have to give back the £1,000,000,000 gold, no one being able to buy it back, and if America did that, gave us, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and the others, say, £150,000,000 gold apiece, something in the way of a gold standard

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stabilisation might be effected. Otherwise paper money will win to a paper system, and the gold peoples will become the strap-hangers. The land and its values will probably be the new anchor, and we shall have to imitate Denmark after the Napoleonic wars and raise a loan on the total value of the land, factories, machinery, etc. To escape we all pawn ourselves inside out on to a sound exchange measurement, which is an entirely practicable scheme; then America can eat her gold, if she likes. About 1923, then, we may reasonably expect an unholy smash, and that is why wise men are going into food and land, for such is the penalty of breaking economic laws. Thus money to-day is speculation. If Germany really pays up, she will crash. If we really try to uphold gold, we shall inevitably crash. Perhaps France, who has all the eggs, chickens, wine, butter, bread, and scents that she wants, is alone fairly comfortable. She, too, will devaluate in her opportunities, and probably we shall turn the Bradbury into a value of 50s. My last joke is a warning. "Don't buy a gold-mine." Buy earth. England's problem will be how to cash out, Europe's—how to cash in.

Unless credit is to be a recurrent divisional sum, a charming fiction or romance, one by one we shall have to divide or cash in on some common basis, chucking gold, reparations, debts and their interest, which can, it would seem, *pace* the professors, the banks, and the economic experts, only be a real scientific world paper token or measurement of exchange, which itself will not be a commodity and so speculative. And when that day comes the financiers will give up their spats and gardenias, for there will no longer be any money in the mechanism of the world's post-war joke.

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Poland and Pan-Slavism

By Robert Dell

THE agreement lately signed between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland improves the relations between the two countries, which have been more or less strained since they recovered their independence. Their chief difference, of course, was about the question of Teschen. Since Poland has already an alliance with Rumania, it would seem at first sight likely that her understanding with Czecho-Slovakia is a preliminary to her entry into the Little Entente. But the reasons that have kept Poland out of the Little Entente hitherto, in spite of the strong pressure of the Quai d'Orsay on the Polish Government, are so fundamental that it seems probable that they will prevent any change in Polish policy in that regard, especially as French influence in Poland is no longer what it was.

It is true that Poland is not in a very comfortable position at this moment. The policy into which the Poles have been led or driven during the last three years has made their relations both with Germany and Russia far from friendly. That, no doubt, was the deliberate aim of French policy. If Poland was incited at the Peace Conference to make claims of which some Poles had dreamed but which hardly one of them had ever imagined to be attainable, it was with the intention of making hostility between Germany and Poland inevitable. But every sane Pole recognises that close relations with Germany or Russia, or both, are essential to the welfare, if not to the existence, of Poland. Situated as she is, if Poland is hostile to both, she will eventually be crushed between the two. The folly of the disastrous foreign policy that has made the Polish mark worth the fiftieth part of a penny is beginning to be realised in Poland. The origin of that policy was in the baleful influence of that tool of the Quai d'Orsay, the Polish National Committee in Paris.

It is possible, in these circumstances, that Poland might

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be forced into the Little Entente in default of other guarantees of security, but it would be only very unwillingly and as a last resource. For the foreign policy of the Little Entente—or at least of Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia, its two principal partners—is fundamentally at variance with the interests of Poland. The Czechs and the Serbs are intensely Pan-Slavist; the Poles are as strongly opposed to Pan-Slavism, for they know that it means Pan-Russianism. They know, too, that a revival of Pan-Russianism would threaten the very existence of Poland. Therefore, the Poles fear nothing more than a restoration of the old Russian Empire and the absorption into it once more of the independent border States. That, on the other hand, is the policy of Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia. For that reason they opposed the admission of Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the League of Nations. The Czechs, said a prominent Pole to me recently, regard themselves as the advanced guard in Europe of the old Russia.

It follows that, although the Polish Government is very much afraid of Bolshevism in Poland—as the intolerant anti-Communist Bill now before the Polish Diet shows—it is less hostile to the Russian Bolshevik Government than Czecho-Slovakia or Jugo-Slavia. The Poles are anti-Russian in sentiment, whereas the Czechs and the Serbs are pro-Russian, but the latter are more favourable to Russian counter-revolutionary movements. Belgrade, where there are thousands of Russian *émigrés*, is the centre of the counter-revolutionaries of the Extreme Right. General Petlura, who was expelled from Poland some months ago, is now in Jugo-Slavia. Prague is the headquarters of the Milyukoff and Kerensky counter-revolutionary groups—the Cadets and the Right Social Revolutionaries. M. Boris Savinkoff went to Prague after his recent expulsion from Poland. The Belgrade counter-revolutionaries are the more noisy, but the less dangerous to the Bolshevik Government. They are mostly stupid people and their policy is the restoration of the Tsarism, which is impossible. The Prague counter-revolutionaries, on the other hand, include some very able men still capable of exercising influence in Russia. It is very improbable that either Czecho-Slovakia or Jugo-Slavia contemplates

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armed intervention in Russia, which would be impossible on their part unless Rumania joined in it. And Rumania is no more Pan-Slavist than Poland and has no more interest in the restoration of the old Russia, which would mean eventually the loss of Bessarabia. Indeed, the Prague counter-revolutionaries, except perhaps M. Savinkoff and his group, have abandoned the policy of armed intervention, which has been abandoned even by the Quai d'Orsay. Men like M. Milyukoff and M. Kerensky hope for the overthrow of the Bolshevik Government by an internal upheaval, which no doubt they do what they can to encourage. Their hope will almost certainly be disappointed. There is no doubt widespread discontent in Russia, but the Russian people is too docile to revolt and the Red Army is too strong for any revolt to be successful. Only the defection of the Red Army could make the overthrow of the Bolshevik Government possible, and of that there is little probability.

The Poles have no particular desire for the overthrow of the Bolshevik Government, for they do not know what would take its place and they suspect that any possible alternative would be worse from the Polish point of view. They believe that any alternative, except a Socialist coalition, of which there is no chance, would threaten the independence of the Russian border States, and they have no sort of confidence that even the independence of Poland would be safe if M. Milyukoff and the Cadets were in power. Some Poles even take the cynical view that the Bolshevik Government weakens Russia and is, therefore, an advantage to Poland. Anybody that looks back on the Polish escapades of the last three years will see that they were always in the interest or supposed interest of Polish Nationalism, never in that of the Russian counter-revolution. The persistent refusal of Marshal Pilsudski to play the game of the Russian counter-revolutionaries has made him *persona ingrata* in Paris and is one of the causes of the change in Franco-Polish relations. Marshal Pilsudski and M. Paderewski would have made peace with Russia in the autumn of 1919, had not Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau prevented them. The Poles eventually made peace with Russia against the wishes of the French Government and thereby brought

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about the downfall of Wrangel, to whose aid the Quai d'Orsay had vainly tried to induce them to go.

The erroneous notion so common in Western Europe, that Poland is the principal enemy of the Russian Bolshevik Government and that the Poles are always contemplating attacks on Russia or promoting attacks by others, has been disseminated by Russian official or semi-official propaganda and by the Communist parties in the various countries. It is not, I think, difficult to suggest a hypothesis to explain this policy. It is improbable that the Russian Government really has any fear of another attack from any quarter, but there are obvious reasons why it should wish Russians to believe that there is still danger of attack. It is necessary to have an excuse for refusing to demobilise the Red Army, which is needed to keep the Government in power, and for continued measures of repression against all critics and opponents of the Government. The Russian Government probably knows that Poland is less hostile to it than Czecho-Slovakia or Jugo-Slavia, but Poland is the natural enemy and it is easy to play on Russian hatred of the Poles. The Bolsheviks do not hesitate to appeal to nationalist sentiment when that suits their purpose. Poland, in fact, serves as a bogey in Russia just as Germany does in France. In both cases popular fear is artificially created to give a reason for maintaining a large army, the real purpose of which it is undesirable in both cases to avow.

So far, then, as Russia is concerned the Poles ask for nothing but security that the old Russia can never be restored. In spite of the exchange from time to time of somewhat acrid diplomatic notes between the Polish and Russian Governments, the relations between Russia and Poland are now better than they have yet been. The Russian Government has at last begun to execute the hitherto unexecuted provisions of the Treaty of Riga, the Polish Government has taken drastic measures to prevent any plotting in Poland against the Russian Government, and M. Karachan, Russian Minister at Warsaw, has informed a correspondent of *L'Humanité* that the Polish Government had nothing to do with the rising in Ukraine, which he declared with truth to have been of small importance. Nevertheless, the Poles are not quite easy about

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the neo-imperialism of the Bolsheviks, which has been manifested particularly in Georgia and Ukraine, where a Bolshevik Government has been imposed and is maintained by Russian bayonets. The Polish Government would like to see the Russian Bolshevik Government recognised by the Western Powers, for the inconvenience, to say the least, of the present situation is manifest. But Poles consider that it should be a condition of recognition that genuine independence be restored to Georgia and Ukraine, and also given to Siberia, Armenia, and Azerbeidjan, if the populations of those countries desire it. Should that be done, however, independence should be limited by the obligation not to erect economic barriers between those countries and Russia, provided of course that Russia gave a reciprocal undertaking.

The establishment of better relations between England and Poland is much to be desired. It should not be difficult, for Polish policy is fundamentally more in accordance with the natural British policy than with that of the Little Entente or even of France. It is plainly to the interest of England, which in this case is also the interest of Europe, to preserve the independence of the border States, to restore that of Georgia and Ukraine, and to make a Pan-Russian revival impossible. On the other hand, it is probable that the Quai d'Orsay, although it has fallen back on the policy of a strong military Poland to be used as a catspaw against Germany and Bolshevik Russia, would prefer the restoration of the old imperialist Russia to be the ally of France, especially as its present policy has not been a brilliant success. As regards Germany, British and Polish policies should be identical, for all intelligent Poles understand that the economic restoration of Germany is to the interest of Poland. The Upper Silesian decision, bad as it is in itself, may be turned to the advantage both of Germany and Poland, if the economic arrangement about Upper Silesia leads, as it may, to a close and general economic connection between the two countries. It is for German statesmanship to bring that about, and British statesmanship should do all in its power to promote such an issue. England should also initiate extended commercial and economic relations with Poland. Poland is the natural link between Russia and

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the rest of Europe and might with advantage be used as a commercial base for trading with Russia. If the Polish Government will consent to measures for securing better financial administration, and in particular to a drastic reduction of military expenditure, the British Government might even guarantee a loan to Poland. Such a loan, with the British guarantee, could, I am informed by Swiss financiers, probably be floated in Switzerland, where there is so much money lying idle that a loan of 14,000,000 francs floated a few months ago by the Canton of Vaud was over-subscribed to the extent of 260,000,000 francs.

One of the primary causes of Polish policy during the last three years was the neglect of the Peace Conference to fix the frontiers of Poland. They are not even yet fixed and it is essential that they should be. The condition of Eastern Galicia is a scandal. That unhappy province has for two years been occupied by a Polish army with the usual results of military occupation. In spite of Polish assertions to the contrary, the Ruthenian inhabitants, who are the majority of the population, have been and are being abominably treated and have reason to regret the mild rule of Austria. Encouraged by the impotence of the Council of the League of Nations, the Poles have now proceeded to hold an election in the district of Vilna, which in the circumstances cannot be a valid test of the feeling of the population, for a free election is impossible under military rule. This should not be tolerated. The departure of General Zeligowski from Vilna is not enough; the Polish army should be compelled to evacuate the territory.

I doubt whether the principle of self-determination can be applied to these regions of Eastern Europe with mixed populations having no sort of national consciousness. The most satisfactory method of dealing with them is probably to decide what is best for them and for Europe and to force the decision on them. I should be disposed to give Eastern Galicia to Poland, on condition that the latter renounces the territory of Vilna. Although the Ruthenian inhabitants of Eastern Galicia are the majority, they are in a minority in the towns, and the salvation of backward countries depends on the predominance of urban civilisation over rural barbarism. Even in Upper Silesia,

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which is not a backward country, the opinion of the towns should have prevailed and German towns should not have been handed over to Poland. But Poland can be given Eastern Galicia only if the latter is made an autonomous province, as it was under Austria, and the Ruthenians are secured all the rights that they enjoyed under Austrian rule, when Ruthenian was an official language as well as Polish and Ruthenians and Poles were on an equality in every respect. In any case, it is imperative that the future of Eastern Galicia should be decided without further delay and the present scandal ended.

If the Poles were wise they would refuse any more territory, for they have too much already and Poland is both ethnologically and geographically unsound. Poland would have been stronger had her territory been smaller and more compact. But the arrangements already made cannot be gone back upon and, since Polish ambitions have been excited in the interest of other countries than Poland, the best must now be made of a rather bad job. What is important is that the questions of Vilna and Eastern Galicia should be settled at once and the frontiers of Poland at last definitely fixed. The Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers, which is responsible for the Vilna dispute by its neglect to give Poland a definite eastern frontier, can settle that dispute by fixing the frontier between Poland and Lithuania. Poland is bound by par. 3 of Article 87 of the Treaty of Versailles to accept its decision.

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Miss Pomfret and Miss Primrose

By Louis Golding

THE way in which Miss Pomfret and Miss Primrose met was typical. It was typical of their previous and independent histories and of their subsequent and joint history; but it is their joint history which really concerns us. This is how they met.

Miss Pomfret got into the train at Cirencester, having just buried her younger sister Ursula. It had always been a whim on the part of Ursula that she should not be buried in the little churchyard at Bramlingham, a mile from the cottage which she and her sister occupied in a blue Cotswold valley. No, she shouldn't like to be so near her sister, she lying so cold and doing nothing, and Miss Pomfret with all the dusting and the cooking and the washing-up to do and quite alone. It would make her uncomfortable. She must be taken to Cirencester, where they were born and where their mother had died. There she would not feel contrite, said Ursula, for taking no hand in the cooking of stews and the setting straight of pictures. So when Ursula died (she had always been expected to die first, having been delicate from childhood) her sister duly carried her away to Cirencester.

Miss Pomfret got into the train for the return journey dry-eyed and a little stern. (Miss Pomfret, I say. It was only as "Miss Pomfret" that Miss Pomfret was ever thought of or known. Even by Ursula, it would seem. Ursula must have known her Christian name, but she died just before this story begins and the knowledge lies with her in Cirencester.) Somehow, Miss Pomfret was on her mettle. Ursula dead; no relative nearer than Nigeria, and he, as Ursula used to say, a Prince Leopold of Holland the way he ill-treated the natives; herself and the vicar of Bramlingham sworn enemies; and those two armchairs in the south room facing each other, where Ursula and she used to talk and knit and nod. How Ursula's chair would

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creak on windy spring evenings! She twisted a loose tress of grey hair from her eyes, stared defiantly into the railway carriage, saw only a little woman in the opposite corner with her face turned away, and entered. Miss Pomfret, as I have said, was on her mettle.

The train moved away and both ladies sat silent and motionless for many minutes. A sense of strain began to tighten the air. Why *wouldn't* she, that other one, turn her head? Why? Was she being superior? Did she resent anybody else getting into the carriage? Gracious me, did the woman think she'd *bought* the carriage? No, it couldn't be exactly that! It didn't belong, somehow, to that old-fashioned bodice and the subdued clothing that wrapped the mysterious little figure. It made Miss Pomfret feel awkward; it was as if one were travelling with a ghost.

Then Miss Pomfret became aware that ever so slightly the shoulders of the stranger were shaking, slightly but quite surely. Then Miss Pomfret felt a cold hand of desolate certainty at her heart. Oh, poor, poor dear, she was sobbing, that tiny, hurt woman, sobbing like a child in the dark.

In one moment Miss Pomfret was by her side, just as she used to find herself suddenly, without quite knowing it, by Ursula's chair or bed, when she gave one of her short sombre coughs.

"Tell me . . . Oh, I'm so sorry . . . can I help?"

The stranger shook her head, but did not turn it towards Miss Pomfret. Her hand still covered her eyes, as it were from the sun, though at that moment actually the sun lay behind a heavy stretch of cloud. And then, unaccountably, Miss Pomfret herself broke down. She had not shed a single tear all these last mournful days, and now a stranger's sorrow, in a common train, darted through her like a stiletto unbearably. Fortunately—Miss Pomfret subsequently remembered—it was at least not a corridor-train. . . .

And then a voice said to her, a faded voice and thin, like a forgotten spinet suddenly touched in an attic, and a voice, none the less, curiously sweet:

"Oh, what is going to happen to us? Here's you as well! What shall we do?"

And Miss Pomfret replied, "I can't tell you how much

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she was . . . how little everything is without her! You too? What have you lost? Is it your sister too? "

A silence followed. The women looked away from each other. Miss Pomfret—sworn foe as she was to fidgets—tapped the thumb of each hand with each successive finger, tapped the floor five times with each foot, adjusted her hat.

And then Miss Primrose—this was the stranger's name—said, " He's gone away. He lied."

The humiliation of that bowed head, the catch of that husky voice, were more poignant than tears. And, as Miss Pomfret knew, there was nothing more to say or to learn.

" Where are you going? " said Miss Pomfret briefly.

" I don't know. I just got a ticket for the first train that left the station. It doesn't matter—nothing matters."

Then said Miss Pomfret, that unromantic lady who had never suffered from illusions because the world had never offered them her, to this crushed child of a woman she had not set eyes on half an hour ago:

" I need you and you me, and there's room for you in our cottage. Ursula is dead. I've just buried her at Cirencester. You and Nell—Nell's the dog—will be great friends, and he'd fret with Ursula . . . away. You are coming? "

Miss Primrose looked up into Miss Pomfret's eyes for twenty or thirty seconds.

" Yes! " she said.

When Miss Pomfret and Miss Primrose arrived at the cottage that evening, what with the oil stove which had to be filled, and the bread which both of them liked ever so thinly cut, and a dozen little domestic concerns and a dozen more, you would have thought that Miss Primrose had occupied that cottage as long as Miss Pomfret. And there was the routine to be explained; oh, there was much to do!

Six years passed quietly at the Cotswold cottage. You can imagine what sort of busy, drowsy years they were. Nell, faithless fellow, accepted Ursula's place without the least demur. He did not utter a single whine of inquiry concerning Ursula, though she had petted him even when Miss Pomfret had lifted her voice and said, " Bad dog, go to bed! " But then why should he? Never again was Ursula mentioned by Miss Pomfret, as never again was

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any reference made to that man who had lied to Miss Primrose and left the world black for her; their obsequies had been spoken in that train speeding from Cirencester. They had passed from the world.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Miss Primrose got up first and made the breakfast. These were egg days, in any permutation of egg. The other three weekdays were Miss Pomfret's and these were fish days, for Miss Pomfret had a hundred ideas on the correct treatment of plaice or haddock or sole. Sunday was arranged as the spirit directed. After breakfast there was the kitchen garden, not to mention the flower beds and the minute rockery. There was painting for Miss Primrose in the afternoons, crochet and knitting for Miss Pomfret; in the evenings, for both, there was the Circulating Library. A gentle world it was, though the vicar of Bramlingham remains difficult and accused Miss Pomfret of Socialism, as the milkman reported. What if the hair grew a little greyer, the fingers a trifle more reluctant? What mattered these?

And then one Wednesday morning—a Miss Primrose morning—Miss Pomfret came down at the usual hour for poached eggs, or eggs, perhaps, scrambled. But there was no smell of toast. The water had boiled away from the aluminium kettle. The door was open and the cold wind blew in from the garden.

Miss Primrose left no note behind. She had taken with her only her coat, hat, and purse. Miss Pomfret, stealing towards the garden-gate that evening, like a ghost, found a briar pipe under the hawthorn that grew just inside the gate. She took it in with her and stuffed it at the bottom of a trunk under a heap of discarded curtains and cloths, so that it was not likely she would come across it again. There was no resentment in Miss Pomfret's heart. She knew it was not a matter as to who had a greater *right* to Miss Primrose, he, the unnamed man who had lied, or herself. It was not a moral issue, an affair of the mind or the conscience at all. She felt merely a bitter taste in the mouth, and heard a dull singing behind her forehead all day, and deep into the night.

"She has taken the latch-key with her," said Miss Pomfret. "I shall have to get another one made."

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Books

BIOGRAPHY.

ROMAIN ROLLAND: THE MAN AND HIS WORK. By STEFAN ZWEIG. George Allen and Unwin. 16*s.* net.

TIME, winnowing, will probably choose *Jean Christophe* as one of the outstanding artistic achievements of the twentieth century, and Romain Rolland will figure in history as the author of this remarkable novel. Time will be right, but we who are only just emerging from one of the great crises in the world's history may be excused if we for a moment forget the artist and remember the man. This, apparently, is Stefan Zweig's view. The well-known Austrian critic and dramatist, although he devotes one section of his study to a consideration of *Jean Christophe*, quite clearly never forgets that Rolland, at a time when most of the intellects of all the belligerent countries lost their heads, retained his.

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BOOKS

Romain Rolland seems to have been destined from childhood to become a "good European," to whom frontiers would not exist. His first idols were Shakespeare and Beethoven, and at an early age Wagner, Renan, Goethe, and Spinoza were meat and drink to him. Greatness attracted him as a magnet steel, and it was inevitable that when, in August, 1914, European civilisation was shaken to its base, he who had called Tolstoy "Master" would not waver: he had his standards. Most of us had none. Not that he was less moved than the rest of us. On August 3rd, 1914, he wrote in his diary: "I feel at the end of my resources. I wish I were dead. It is horrible to live when men have gone mad, horrible to witness the collapse of civilisation." And a few days later: "My distress is so colossal an accumulation of distresses that I can scarcely breathe. The ravaging of France, the fate of my friends, their deaths, their wounds. The grief at all this suffering, the heartrending sympathetic anguish with the millions of sufferers. . . . If I could but sleep, never to reawaken." This deadening despair passed, and he gave himself up to work. From "above the battlefield" he worked on behalf of the suffering war victims of all nations, and by his pen strove to lessen the hatred which was spreading like a blight all over Europe. His correspondence with Verhaeren and with Hauptmann, in which the great Belgian and the great German recited a *credo* which both of them would now vehemently disown, will be preserved as a record of war-time futility. Rolland reaped the usual reward of peacemakers—contumely and venomous misrepresentation. But he was used to failures and remained unembittered. According to his philosophy, struggle is in itself an end. "It is good to struggle after the unattainable," he would say, "when the unattainable is God."

Stefan Zweig's biography is a noble tribute from one "good European" to another. The translation, which reads fluently, is the work of Eden and Cedar Paul.

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

THE SPORT OF OUR ANCESTORS. By LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE. Constable and Co., Ltd. 21s. net.

A ROGER DE COVERLEY gift book this is, and, as its sporting Peer would be the first to admit, it is kinder not to look a gift horse in the mouth. It deals with the packs that hunt foxes, is beautifully illustrated, and will, no doubt, find a place on some table in innumerable country houses. None the less, this much ought to be said, that truly it is a strange sign that the busy author should select this period of all others to compile, with all gravity, a book of this nature, unless, which we are sure he would repudiate, he writes as the antiquarian of an obsolescent sport. For this we know, England cannot in the future be given up to fox-hunting. Sterner tasks lie before us. Yet the book is quite admirable, learned, and worth reading; indeed, it has no little charm, traceable to the genial personality of its compiler. He knows his 'osses. He loves the field. He is infectious as peer, as sportsman, as Victorian.

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A London Mosaic. By W. L. George. Illustrated by Philippe Forbes Robertson. Collins. 15*s*. net.

The title of this volume of essays places a button on the critical foil, for a mosaic not only permits, but demands, some such juxtaposition of inconsequence as that which W. L. George's interest in London life cements in this volume. Perhaps it will be claimed that the style, with its asides and parentheses, its occasional tortured smartnesses and worse puns, is also protected by this initial nomenclature. A mosaic, then; let it be granted: a jolly piecing together of scraps, oddities, and highly coloured chips of fact and thought. There emerges an amusing whole with no great design value, but saying pleasing and often penetrating things about London places and people, amusements, food and drink and feeding and drinking places, about art, artists, and Philistines. The gregarious mentality of W. L. George finds in the life of the town such a wealth of subject as to save him from the need of selection. Free from sentiment, he has no illusions and he creates none. He is no "passionate Baedeker," but the man in the street articulate.

The well-produced volume is illustrated by a number of Philippe Forbes Robertson's sketches. They are patterned, decorative, charming, interesting, fascinating; they are art. But they are *not* London, and they haven't the remotest connection with the writing of W. L. George.

The Pleasures of Ignorance. By Robert Lynd. Grant Richards, Ltd. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

Mr. Lynd, whose skill as a raconteur has lightened the labours of so many reviewers, here whips the stream of fancy with a delicate touch. An hour in his whimsical company is a good antidote for any kind of nostalgia. These vignettes are, we suspect, the result of imaginative house-cleaning, when the mental shelves are emptied of their old contents, and, with a lingering pleasure, furbished anew. He has a proper respect for barbers, beans, jokes, nature, and the human stomach, and is, we take it, a cheery soul for a round of golf. At the second hole he would divulge his fears of a revival of virtue in Britain, and at the fourth he would classify virtue as the avoidance of vices that do not attract us. The chief pleasure of ignorance is that of asking questions. We generalise, but we do not actually know, which Mr. Lynd contentedly suggests is not altogether miserable, solacing himself with the reflection that the attainments of men of science owe much of their proportion to our lack of them. Perhaps they don't know so much after all! Undoubtedly an uplifting thought. By and large, this is a companionable book. Mr. Lynd must have enjoyed writing it. We are glad he did.

The Future of the Novel. By Meredith Starr. Heath Cranton. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

This "series of interviews with renowned authors" was undertaken for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which most of them have appeared. There are sixty-two opinions in all, Mr. Starr having flung a net of medium mesh. Some of the big fish have escaped, but he has captured others of

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stuffable size, and this book is by no means a bottle of tiddlers. It is obviously impossible to review these talks and letters individually—a composite photograph will best give the sense of the meeting. It is agreed, all but unanimously, that the novel has a future—possibly psychical—certainly not psychological, analytical, or merely sexual. Adventure, incident, and romance are indicated as probables, whilst the spread of education may favour better or worse type of work, according to the proportion of readers who turn writers. Cost plays a serious part, and high price indicates better work than low. There may be outstanding genius coming, but this is uncertain; what is certain is that Miss Dorothy Richardson and Mr. Shaw have disturbed a good many of their brothers and sisters of the pen, and that cinema rights are a potent factor in production, a fact which the true artist is bound to deprecate. Anyway, realism is dead, but you never can tell. These novelists talk (and write) uncommonly well, and have provided a lot of readable free copy quite worth preserving in permanent form.

FICTION.

CROME YELLOW. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. Chatto and Windus. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

NOT, perhaps, quite so fresh as his first book, *Crome Yellow* is a charming piece of work, amply justifying the number of critics who believe in Mr. Aldous Huxley as one of the coming lights. He is still too precious, too near to the University, and just misses the broad simplicity of Norman Douglas, for example, whose talents lie in much the same direction, and his presentation of character is still too much on the surface. We recommend Turgenief to Mr. Huxley, or Max Beerbohm. But this is criticism—an abomination. To many, this careful study will appeal irresistibly, for it is highly clever, quite humorous, light, well-bottled, fruity. One feels the brain behind the pages. One has to smile in quite unexpected places. One wants more, and of few modern novels can this be truthfully said. Mr. Huxley has still to be "placed," but already he is in the front ranks, with years and years before him.

FICTION.

ELINOR COLHOUSE. By STEPHEN HUDSON. Martin Secker. 5*s*. net.

THIS brilliantly told episode is, in a dramatic sense, unusually rounded and complete. We are spared all commentary and analysis, and the players just act and talk with the scantiest indication of scenery and make-up. Yet they and their surroundings do get most effectively projected, real and alive from the first—the ultimate proof of good craftsmanship. If more were wanted, the theme—designing beauty and chivalrous youth—the primordial problem of white to play and mate in three moves—would show the author's skill in handling a classic theme with originality. Elinor Colhouse is unaffectedly "out for blood." She is even a rather clumsy adventuress, but her will to win carries her crude sex gambit and hackneyed wiles to her point of

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success—marriage—although Richard Kurt, young and inexperienced as he is, obviously smells danger, and is not too much intoxicated to be blind to the vulgarity of her friends and their pushing methods. The contrasting English and American types and points of view are a further complication in an admirably developed situation. A distinctly artistic story.

WAY OF REVELATION. By WILFRID EWART. Putnam. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

PART of the war scenes in this book originally appeared in THE ENGLISH REVIEW, which takes rather a legitimate pride in the full work now expressed in a novel, and in the author. In one sense it is the most notable work since the Armistice, for it deals with realities, not with artificial situations and *potins*, and may be likened to Henri Bataille's *Feu*, of which it is the English counterpart. Indeed the war scenes are of historical interest, so vivid and tense are they, so true, so actual. But the author's object was twofold. Not only the front, the "back" also figures, and this part of the book is disagreeable, almost painful in its hideous revelation of life in the world of war profiteering. Here also the author cuts with a razor edge. He is young enough not to fear criticism. He has written a startling book, a thing that will live as a chronicle of the times, and he has not spared the women, whom he shows up in their true garb of safe "patriotism." The book is so good that the question must involuntarily be asked: Is the author a new writer? Or has he written this one thing from the inspiration of emotion, from the need of purging his soul of the tragic memories of the war? We advise people to read this quite one of the best of war novels so far.

GODS. By SHAW DESMOND. Duckworth. 8*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS is a retrospective story which carries us back to the period of William Booth's early days at the Congress Hall, with all the fervid sensationalism which infected so much of the religious life of the time. Mr. Desmond has had to concentrate his sects and churches around the career of one young man—his own family has three varieties and a visiting Jesuit—and much of the discussion of scientific doubt is focussed in a certain house in Westminster where there are rather acrimonious tea parties. The hundred religions are suggested, but the one sauce—the story—wanders with rather depressing improbability amongst them. Many real people will be recognised amongst the protagonists, but they are used rather than pictured, and, like the imaginary personages, they are rather incredible and not very attractive. Yet Mr. Shaw Desmond has decided power, and one feels that upon a smaller and less encumbered stage he would do striking work.

POETRY.

MUSIC. By JOHN FREEMAN. Selwyn Blount, Ltd. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS collection of John Freeman's lyrical and narrative poems gives the full measure of a distinct and individual voice amongst our younger

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poets. Mr. Freeman writes as one to whom metrical expression is an habitual necessity to be read by those to whom prose is a blunted expression of nature and emotion. The entire content of this abundance gives us a spirit saddened but sweet to whom the splendours of nature and of hope remain undimmed—perhaps enlarged—by the added poignancy of the halfway station. The lyrics have the spontaneity and grace of the muse which is ever young—the muse whose invocation is, perhaps, the most finished of all his shorter songs. The longer narrative poems are of darker and more mingled texture, full of the comprehension of sadness, of love that suffers and wonders why. The subjects are subfusc, even grotesque sometimes—tar and feathers are strange to poetic treatment, although the tragic expiation is real enough—but to every poet his own subject is the best, and Mr. Freeman gives dignity even to a topic essentially ridiculous. What all will appreciate who have eyes to see and ears to hear is the remarkable singlemindedness of the poet who lives so close to nature and is so rapt with the simple exquisiteness of the seasons' succeeding significances, and to whom the turbid stream of life brings a noble and patient comprehension.

A Dish of Apples. By Eden Phillpotts. Hodder and Stoughton. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Phillpotts, with Mr. Rackham as decorator, has produced a jolly book, such as the subject merits. His odes to the various best of apples are neatly and featly done, his "Song to Pomona" has a proper note of homely state, his "Cider Makers" is a finely felt bit of pictorial versification, and he is happiest of all in his "Wassailing the Apple Trees," with its old-world savour and its Uncle Tom Cobbleigh lilt. Some of our poetasters will grudge Mr. Phillpotts his glorious subject and his spendthrift allusiveness, to Eve, to Newton, to Atalanta, and the whole tradition of the apple; a wealth of subject scattered by the way. Thus the dead sea fruit and the apple of discord may come in, but in no other way, for this happy thought is happily carried out both by author and artist, and the result is altogether delightful, wholesome, tonic, and satisfying, as apple lore should be.

WAR.

A History of the Great War. Vol. 1. By John Buchan. Thomas Nelson and Sons. 25*s.* net.

Here is the first volume of the four which will contain the re-written tale set forth in no less than twenty-four smaller publications by Mr. Buchan between February, 1915, and July, 1919. The reasons that determined this condensation are given in the preface with what seems to us admirable lucidity. Should the forthcoming three volumes achieve the distinction of their predecessor—and why not?—Mr. Buchan is to be congratulated. As a war correspondent, an Intelligence Officer, and later as Director of Information, he acquired not only a general knowledge of the Western front, but studied, for the purposes of propaganda, political reactions and sentiment in many countries. The volume takes

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us from the outbreak to Neuve Chapelle, that heroic tragedy, the result of which, grim though it was, proved insufficient to open the eyes of the Allied commands. It is not possible in this brief space to do justice to Mr. Buchan's work. He seems to have perceived from the outset that it would be brains rather than blood that must spell victory. The analysis of the situation in Germany immediately preceding the war, and the story of those magnificent months that led to the Marne, are particularly well told. And to those who did not serve in France we commend the pages devoted to an understanding sketch of " temperaments in alliance." The book is happily subdivided and furnished with excellent maps. More than that, it is a document of high endeavour.

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